

Inquiries of the Ministry

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE**MEDICARE—DISCONTINUANCE OF EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION IN PROVINCES IMPLEMENTING PLAN—APPLICATION TO ARMED FORCES AND R.C.M.P.**

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday last I asked the President of the Treasury Board a question which appears at page 10753 of *Hansard* concerning the discontinuance of employer contribution by the government of Canada in provinces implementing the medicare plan. I wonder whether the minister is in a position to reply to that question today.

Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, in provinces which are implementing federal medicare programs the basic Government Services Medical Insurance plan is being discontinued since, in large measure, the benefits under this plan are provided by the medicare program in the province. Accordingly, neither employer nor employee contributions are now required for this basic G.S.M.I. plan in such provinces. Of course the hon. member is aware that the government contributes a substantial portion of the cost of the medicare program.

A supplementary G.S.M.I.P. is being introduced in these provinces coincident with the changeover to medicare to provide those benefits which were provided under the government plan but which are not provided by the medicare program and thus at least maintain the level of benefits which had existed previously. The cost of the supplementary G.S.M.I. plan is being shared by the government and the employees on a 50-50 basis.

I may say to the hon. member that in his own province where we sought the agreement of the minister of health of that province to making available a reduced contribution rate under the provincial medicare plan for members of the armed forces that was not agreed as it has been in the other provinces.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Defence because I believe there are variations in respect of the services. Is the Minister of National Defence prepared to outline just what is happening with regard to the federal government's contribution for basic medical care programs for servicemen serving in a province?

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I think the President of the Treasury Board has indicated that in all provinces which have implemented medicare, except Alberta, the provincial government has reduced premiums for the armed forces personnel in recognition of the fact that they already receive medical services from the armed forces themselves.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, I apologize, but in respect of this problem federal employees of the armed forces and the R.C.M.P. are in a turmoil.

Mr. Speaker: I am wondering whether the hon. member thinks the question should be asked about all the services.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): This is the last. The question is whether the R.C.M.P. are dealt with in the same way and whether the policy of the government is the same with regard to them.

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I shall take the question as notice and bring forward a reply.

CONSUMER CREDIT**CO-OPERATION WITH PROVINCES TO EFFECT CONTROL OF INFLATION**

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. In view of the statement yesterday by the governor of the Bank of Canada that consumer credit restrictions would probably have been imposed during the past two years if federal authorities had possessed the power to impose them, does the government intend to approach the provinces with a view to obtaining these powers in order to obtain an effective means of controlling inflation?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Not at this particular moment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hees: Is it the intention of the government to completely disregard this effective means of controlling inflation and do nothing about it?

Mr. Benson: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hees: Well, what in the world do you intend to do to control inflation? Let the house know what you intend to do, for heavens sake.