

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

their sale. If they are harmful, the law should contain certain restrictions.

Mr. Jack Cullen (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, in his question of March 9 the hon. member for Elgin (Mr. Stafford) asked the government to withhold publication and distribution of the next report on cannabis until it has been carefully scrutinized and a proper precautionary foreword prepared by a team of medical experts. In his submission tonight the hon. member has re-emphasized the position he took at that time.

• (2210)

The commission of inquiry into the non-medical use of drugs will shortly make public its final report on cannabis. It does not seem to us to be in the public interest to delay publishing the report on such a controversial subject.

On such an important matter involving the health of so many Canadians, the minister and his department would be expected to consult, if necessary, members of the medical profession and would also rely on the collaboration of those national bodies specializing in the health care of Canadians. The final report on cannabis will be made public in the near future and, as in the case of so many other reports of this kind, interested bodies will certainly make their views known. Surely that is one of the points of financing such a report. The government will also study very carefully the recommendations of the commission before taking any action.

In order to reassure the hon. member I would like to refer him to the example of the statement of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) of February 24 on government action to control abuse of methadone and amphetamines. The hon. member will see the extent to which the minister went in consulting the medical profession.

Finally, the hon. member should remember that the commission itself has been consulting over the last two years dozens and dozens of experts in the field of the non-medical use of drugs and has received a great number of briefs from interested groups and individuals. A glance at the interim report and the treatment report will show the hon. member the seriousness of these studies.

VETERANS AFFAIRS—ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION BY HEALTH CLUB AGAINST VETERAN WITH WOODEN LEG

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): On February 29, as reported at page 357 of *Hansard* I asked the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Laing) whether he would investigate the incident of discrimination against an Ottawa veteran. To that he replied:

Mr. Speaker, I would doubt very much that interference on my part or on the part of the Department of Veterans Affairs would be very helpful in this particular case.

Not being satisfied with the answer, I am now pursuing the matter on the "late show" this evening. I think that a case such as this incident should be investigated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and if not by them by the

[Mr. Stafford.]

Department of National Health and Welfare which has some interest in health clubs, or by the Department of Justice, because in my opinion this is a case of pure discrimination on the basis of the physical disability of a person who lost a leg in the Second World War.

The facts of the case are pretty well known, but I want to give a brief history of them tonight. Harold Mullins is an Ottawa veteran who lost his leg in the Second World War. In April of 1967 he joined the Carlingwood branch of the Ottawa, Vic Tanny's health club. A year later he bought a life membership and in total spent \$500 in membership fees for himself and his wife. Vic Tanny's knew when Mr. Mullins purchased his membership that he was an amputee: he did not try to hide it. Mr. Mullins is quoted in newspapers as saying:

The first thing I told them when I signed up was that I had an amputation. My disability was discussed at the time and the fellow that sold me the membership said in my case it didn't matter.

Mr. Mullins then used the facilities, I am told, on an average of about three times a week. He had no problem with the facilities, he used most of them, and this is vouched for by members of the club to whom I and those in my office have spoken. His membership was revoked by Vic Tanny's because, as they said, he did not meet certain regulations outlined by the club. Mr. Mike Mundy, Ottawa director, said, as reported in the *Ottawa Journal* of March 23, that the decision was prompted by the regulation requiring members to have all four of their limbs. He said:

—we have nothing against amputees. We simply were not covered by insurance.

I decided to investigate the case, and on March 9 I telephoned Mr. Mundy's office. He referred me to the general manager of Vic Tanny's at Toronto, Mr. Leizer. The general manager in Toronto told us that insurance was not a factor, and he did not refer at all to the regulation that a person should have four limbs to participate in his club. As a matter of fact, we are quite sure of the reason he did not refer to it. I have here a contract signed by Mr. Mullins when he joined Vic Tanny's and it states quite clearly that a person with his type of disability can participate in the club. The only part of the contract that refers at all to a disability is paragraph 6, and I want to put this on record:

Buyer and member warrant, represent and agree that member is in good physical condition and that he has no disability, impairment or ailment preventing him from engaging in active or passive exercise or that will be detrimental or inimical to his health, safety, comfort, or physical condition if he does so engage or participate.

The type of disability Mr. Mullins had would not have prevented him from participating in activities at this particular club. The general manager of Vic Tanny's health club in Toronto said that his membership was revoked, not because of the regulations but because it would be very hazardous for a disabled person to get around the club. He said there were "steps leading to the various facilities". He offered to fly to Ottawa to show me around the club. This was unnecessary, Mr. Speaker, because I and my office had already talked to club members who had said that this was not the case and that there are no steps once you get into the club.