

Minister of National Defence



Ministre de la Défense nationale

22 August 1985

Mr. Gordon Towers, M.P.
Parliamentary Secretary to the
Solicitor General of Canada
Room 149-CONF.
House of Commons
Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0A6

COPIES sent to:
25 MEMBERS
WHO WROTE TO ME
AUG 27th '85
Jm.

Dear Gordon:

I thank you for your letter of 18 July 1985 concerning a dental care insurance plan for the dependants of members of the Canadian Forces (CF).

This issue was the focus of intensive discussions in 1979 and 1980 between representatives of the Treasury Board, the Public Service unions, the CF and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), in the Standing Committee on Health Insurance Programs of the National Joint Council of the Public Service. Discussion was discontinued when the Government of the day made it known that it would not share in the cost of premiums for dental care insurance plans.

Efforts were made subsequently by the unions, the CF and the RCMP to develop dental insurance plans funded wholly by the employee. These plans that did not include employer participation in the form of premium cost sharing did not prove to be feasible and the idea had to be abandoned.

Members of the CF and their dependants were advised of these developments in June 1981 through the medium of the Canadian Forces Personnel Newsletter which is widely distributed throughout the service. I have enclosed a copy of the pertinent article for your information.

As you are aware, the President of the Treasury Board announced on 17 April 1985, an agreement in principle with the Public Service unions for Government

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participation in a Public Service dental plan. If this agreement results in a viable dental plan for the Public Service it can be anticipated that the same benefits will become available to the CF as a normal development.

You will appreciate that this Department cannot approach the Treasury Board in regard to a dependants' dental plan at this juncture, since it is not covered by the agreement. I would emphasize that this is an agreement in principle only, and in any event, the Government would not wish to prejudice its bargaining position with the unions by making precedent-setting arrangements for the CF. Accordingly, activity in this area by this Department in the immediate future will be limited to the monitoring of developments.

I trust that this will help clarify the position of the Department of National Defence and will provide the basis for a reply to your constituents. Thank you for bringing their concerns to my attention.

Sincerely,



Erik Nielsen