

Oral Questions

the taxpayers no more than \$85 million. Estimates the justice minister tabled later with the standing committee revealed the cost to be \$118.9 million. These estimates did not include the cost for the gun inspectors who will now have to be hired and trained to ensure compliance with the Firearms Act.

I ask the justice minister, how much will the hiring and training of these new gun inspectors add to the cost of the gun legislation?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the entire cost of the program was put before the committee, of which the hon. member was an active and hard-working member. The committee examined the cost estimates and for weeks heard 70 witnesses discussing costs, among other things.

I conclude from the committee's work and its report to the House, which is due next week, that it found that the estimates presented by the government were indeed accurate and complete.

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, if that were true then I would not be standing here asking about the cost of the program.

I have been told by the justice minister that he will not even reply to requests from some authorities in areas of the country regarding the failure of the federal government to reimburse them for the cost to administer the present gun control legislation.

Did the justice minister discuss with the provinces and the territories the additional cost of hiring and training the required gun inspectors before he imposed these conditions on them through his amendments to his gun control legislation?

• (1145)

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the the hon. member knows, we have told the provinces and territories the cost of establishing, implementing and designing the registration system will be borne by the federal government. We have also told them the cost of administering the registration system will be paid by revenues generated through the reasonable fees that will be charged.

Based on the figures we put before the committee and the very reliable estimates we produced, there is no basis in cost to oppose the registration of firearms.

I wish the hon. member would put aside the details he is trying to raise which have been fully explored in committee, and explain to the House and the country why he is opposing something the police forces in his own province, and by a margin of two out of three, the people in his own province want to see the House put in place.

[Translation]

BOVINE SOMATOTROPIN

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. The Minister of Health must be aware that the European Community has declared a seven-year moratorium on the use of recombinant bovine somatotropin because this product is a health hazard to both humans and animals.

Given that Health Canada has not yet completed its studies and that the voluntary moratorium expires in 22 days, does the minister intend to take action by imposing a real moratorium?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada's role is to determine if a product is safe and does what it is supposed to do. The moratorium that has been in effect for a year was arrived at through negotiations between Agriculture Canada and the producers, with the approval of Health Canada. Health Canada's only responsibility is to ensure that the product is safe.

Mr. Michel Daviault (Ahuntsic, BQ): Mr. Speaker, earlier, my colleagues reminded this House of the illegalities committed during this voluntary moratorium. How can the minister condone the use of a product that is banned in Canada, when her department does not even enforce the legislation? Will she allow the lifting of the moratorium? Is this what she calls taking action?

[English]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after consultations with officials in Quebec, with Customs Canada, with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, we have not found any evidence that the product is being used illegally in Canada.

If the hon. member has any evidence of that nature please bring it forward. It is not being sold in Canada nor is it about to be sold unless Health Canada proves it is safe and effective and that has not happened.

It was a voluntary moratorium arrived at through negotiations with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the producers of the product. If there is going to be an extension of the moratorium I believe it has to be negotiated again between Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the producers of BST.

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CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

In my riding of Peace River some farmers have diversified and are now growing organically grown wheat. This is a special-