

HERBICIDES

2,4-D—REQUEST FOR SUSPENSION OF USE

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare who undoubtedly knows that a study has been completed in his Department by Dr. Morrison showing that there is a steady increase in the occurrence of a form of lymphatic cancer linked to the common weed-killer 2,4-D.

The study by Dr. Morrison also establishes that the frequency and the number of deaths have doubled at a time when most other types of cancer have been declining. He suggested that there is a link with the 2,4-D weed-killer.

My question is simply this. Will the Minister ask the Minister of Agriculture to suspend the use of this weed-killer until there is a clear demonstration that such a weed-killer is not a threat to human health?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, this question or a similar one was asked of the Minister of Agriculture last week. The Hon. Member knows what the reply was.

I should indicate to the Hon. Member that there is an ongoing study of the issue, as well as a working committee. I will check with them again in terms of that work and in terms of any recommendations. The answer that the Hon. Member and the House received last week on 2,4-D is still the same this week.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Davenport on a short supplementary, please.

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL COMMITMENT

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, because the answer was inconclusive it is important for the sake of public health to ask this question of the Minister himself. He has a mandate to protect Canadians from a threat to their health.

Therefore, I need to know from the Minister whether he will take it upon himself not to launch another study and put at risk the health of Canadians, but urge the Minister of Agriculture to suspend the use of 2,4-D until it is proven that there is no such threat as demonstrated by the study by Dr. Morrison. Will he give us that commitment today?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, in my first answer I was not suggesting another study. I was outlining for the Hon. Member and the House the work that is ongoing and that is being done with respect to 2,4-D.

● (1500)

Additionally, the Hon. Member should know that information and very strong recommendations in terms of the application of 2,4-D and how those who apply 2,4-D can protect

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themselves have also been part of the ongoing work of the Department of Agriculture and of my Department. For example, much of the damage was done by people who were not taking proper precautions in the application of 2,4-D. That work has been done.

In the remainder of that answer, Mr. Speaker, I was not suggesting another study.

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FORESTRY

REQUEST THAT SEPARATE MINISTRY BE ESTABLISHED

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. During the 1984 election campaign the Prime Minister promised time and again that there would be a full Ministry of Forests and a full Minister appointed at the federal level, and that was restated in the *PC Campaign Handbook* on page 105.

I would like to ask the Deputy Prime Minister if, before the next election is called, there will be a full Minister of Forestry and a full Department at the federal level.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think that everyone in the House would realize that the current incumbent who is responsible for forestry is doing an excellent job and has made a tremendous impact upon the forestry industry.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: Success is what we are after here, and there has been a tremendous amount of success in terms of promoting the forestry industry in Canada, and particularly recognizing the jurisdictional responsibility in the hands of the provinces.

Clearly the federal Government has accepted its role and responsibility in this regard, and will continue to do so.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FORESTRY AGREEMENTS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I take it that the answer is no, that there will not be a full Minister of Forestry in Canada under a Conservative Government.

My supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister or to the Minister of Finance. Has the Government decided in principle whether or not to sign new five-year forest renewal agreements with the provinces?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, those agreements are currently under consideration by Cabinet colleagues. When a decision is reached with regard to them, and the other ERDA agreements are completed, an announcement will probably be made.