

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, obviously, the Minister of Health was instructed not to make her position known, but I want to remind her that she cannot negate her responsibility concerning the certification of new drugs.

Does the minister realize that her refusal to take position on the issue of patent drugs intensifies the climate of uncertainty and implicitly encourages those who do not want protection for new drugs.

[English]

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps a brief lesson in constitutional law would be in order.

As the members of the Bloc will understand we have a position as a government. This is unlike the Bloc, which does not seem to have a position at all.

If I understand what the critic for health of the Bloc Quebecois is saying, she wants a change. She is talking about the costs of health care. I would like to understand exactly what her position is on this issue. If she wants to get up and state what it is I will be happy to hear from her on it.

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FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Bill Gilmour (Comox—Alberni, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. During the past year both the federal government and the province of B.C. have been spending money in Europe to defend Canadian logging practices.

At the same time and completely opposite to the previously mentioned programs, the minister's department has been funding, through CIDA, Canadian environmental groups that actively discredit B.C. logging practices in North America and in Europe.

Why is the government funding groups whose main purpose is to deliberately undermine the Canadian forest industry?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the hon. member that this is a legitimate question. I will inquire immediately and find out if his allegations are correct.

If they are I assure him that we will stop any funding of this kind.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Charles Caccia (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. In 1990 the government of the day promised a discussion paper following which an oceans act would be introduced in the House. Neither the discussion paper nor the bill saw the light of day.

The proposed act would protect the quality of Canada's coastal waters and oceans. In view of the importance of three oceans to Canada's well-being I would like to ask the minister if he can indicate to us whether an oceans act will be introduced in the House?

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for his question. The member for Davenport is deservedly well known as one of the strongest environmental voices in the country today.

I am pleased to say to the member that the government will move forward on the recommendation of the NABST report on an oceans act. It is our intention to release as early as tomorrow a public discussion document entitled "A Vision for Ocean Management" so we can hear from coastal people and all of those concerned about the health of our oceans.

As quickly as we can make it happen and as efficiently as is appropriate we will move forward with legislation setting out a new oceans act for Canada.

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● (1450)

[Translation]

ARMS EMBARGO IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The United States' decision to no longer participate in the control of the arms embargo in the former Yugoslavia provoked strong reactions among the allies, creating division within NATO and member countries of the former Yugoslavia contact group. The NATO Council, which met in Brussels this morning, insists on solidarity within the alliance.

Can the minister tell us what Canada's position is regarding the embargo in the former Yugoslavia?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that Canada continues to believe that it is very important to maintain the arms embargo in the former Yugoslavia. The United States' decision does not jeopardize this effort, since other countries, particularly those which have troops in the area, will be able to effectively maintain the embargo.

Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us if he will reconsider Canada's participation in the UN mission in the former Yugoslavia in the event that the United States stands by this decision?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just told the member that the United States' decision does not jeopardize the arms embargo. However, Canada has already indicated, through the Prime Minister, that we would withdraw our troops if the United Nations decided to