

Oral Questions

• (1450)

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I respectfully submit to the hon. member that he is talking through his hat. I do not have a counsel before that court.

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FOOD AND DRUGS**WARNING ON USE OF ASPIRIN BY CHILDREN**

Mr. Gus Mitges (Grey-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. On June 4 the United States Health and Human Services Secretary, Richard Schweiker, ordered the food and drug administration to take the necessary steps to warn parents and others not to give aspirin, ASA and other salicylates containing drugs to infants and young children suffering from influenza, chicken pox and other types of viral infections because the drug is linked with Reye's Syndrome, an illness which causes permanent brain damage and death in 30 per cent of the cases.

I would like to ask the minister if her department is aware of this problem and, if so, will she also be taking the necessary steps to warn parents and other members of the Canadian public of the danger of giving this drug under the circumstances I have mentioned?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, in Canada, no guidelines have been issued as yet to Canadian parents or Canadians in general regarding the use of aspirin for children, but we are aware of the situation in the United States. We are watching developments closely in the U.S., and in Canada, we have decided to start discussions with the Canadian Paediatric Society, with whom we have been in touch about this matter.

[English]

We decided to wait for their annual meeting a little later in June of this year to finalize the dossier. We may then have to issue a warning to all Canadian parents. Before any formal move it should be noted that, if possible, aspirin should not be given to children whenever something else could be used.

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ENERGY**MARKET INCENTIVES FOR SOLAR INDUSTRY**

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, despite the showers today it is "Sun Day" in Ottawa. I therefore have a question for the affable Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Earlier this month the solar industries okayed their long-awaited warranty program which ensures consumer protection for their products. That removes the last roadblock, which the

alternative energy report said was necessary before market incentives could be put into place.

I wonder if the minister is prepared to tell us today what market incentives he has in mind for the solar industry so that solar can finally compete with the heavily-subsidized gas, oil, hydro and nuclear industries.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I thank the affable member for his question. He forgot to mention one step, and that is the establishment of standards. I am pleased to inform the hon. member that tomorrow the Canadian Standards Board will probably approve new standards for the solar industry. That will also be a very important step in ensuring the viability of that particular industry.

I would also like to inform the hon. member that the National Energy Program has allocated about \$160 million to support the solar industry in the next five years, either through research or support for a number of activities. The industry has requested that we give particular attention to the commercialization of the solar industry. That is indeed a welcome initiative, and the government will examine this particular aspect with great interest.

IMPORTANCE OF EXPORT MARKET

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, we know that the PUSH program was to be a five-year program. After four years only about \$20 million of the \$125 million allocated has been spent. We spend \$10 billion a year on oil compensation. We have spent about \$4 billion on nukes. I could go on and on, but I am sure you do not want that, Madam Speaker. The point is that the amount directed to solar and its marketplace incentives is peanuts compared with the billions we are spending on more traditional and centralized forms of energy development. Our solar collectors can compete, and they have won awards all over the world. If we are not prepared to provide some incentives in the domestic market, what of the \$4 billion foreign market? What is the minister prepared to do to ensure our share of the export market? At the moment it is equally puny.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the Canadian solar industry has indeed been extremely dynamic and innovative. We are very happy that the PUSH program, to which my hon. friend has referred, has been the mainstay of that industry during the last few years. Had it not been for the support of the federal government, we probably would have no solar industry at the present time. We are making solar energy an alternative under the oil substitution program, just as natural gas, electricity and wood qualify for conversion grants. We have indeed taken steps to support and encourage the use of solar energy in our country.

As far as exports are concerned, the Minister of Trade and his department have also been actively engaged in supporting