being backed up by research, I believe now in 13 labs in a number of countries, relating to the toxin which still has not been isolated, as well as inspectors throughout the industry, as well as through Fisheries and Oceans, and also the assurance to the industry.

My overriding consideration has been health. I think, though I do not get into or haven't talked to the industry—it is not my role—for the industry as well it is best. Once there is a clean bill of health for them as well, that is the best news for them in relationship to this incident.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT CONSIDER COMPENSATION FOR PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same Minister. In view of the fact that there is another concern which particularly small producers and distributors have, that is the one of compensation, would the Minister and the Government consider compensating producers and distributors? In light of the fact that this particular incident had more to do with the mix-up last Friday and the various statements with respect to shellfish and the toxin, it is completely out of their control. Would the Government consider compensation?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, in relation to the toxin first of all I, possibly more than anyone else, would like to have an answer on that as quickly as possible. We are working to that end.

In respect to the industry, I think what is important for the Minister of Health is to make sure that the research and the investigation are complete, and I think that any assessment in respect to all other issues can then take place after that.

Mr. Speaker: This will be the last question. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

PRESS RELEASE—INITIAL REPORT OF BAN ON LOBSTERS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Why did medical evidence justify a press release from his Department and that of the Minister of Fisheries at noon on Friday banning lobsters, all shellfish, and yet 45 minutes later that ban was lifted?

I ask the Minister: did he read the press release before it was issued to ensure that it was accurate? Won't he admit that what was negligent on one weekend was a panic the next weekend?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no, and I have explained the week previous. With regard to the alert on shellfish, I think what the right hon. gentleman has also to accept is the definition of shellfish. I won't go into that specifically, because I think if he would check with Fisheries and Oceans he would find the difference. But I go back and I say to him this: I think it was important as I have given the information in respect to the number of people who had been affected by the toxin—the one death and the 14 who were hospitalized at the time—the matter that a second species was discovered to be toxic, and that we had not contained the issue to the geographic area prior to that Friday.

I come back to the words that he used in the House on the eighth, as I have always used those words myself, that is, for me my over-all consideration was health. Surely if that was valid last week, it was valid last Friday and it is valid today. I say to the right hon. gentleman that he can have whatever views he wants, either of this Minister or of this Government, but one thing he cannot change is, because it suits him politically today, to say something differently from what he was saying last week.

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Mr. Speaker: I must advise the House that the Question Period has ended. Before recognizing the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) I understand that the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Ms. Dewar) has a question of privilege and it may well be that it is the same question of privilege. Could I have some indication of that?

Ms. Dewar: Mr. Speaker, I think we are dealing with something very serious.

Mr. Speaker: I have asked a question of both Hon. Members. Can they tell me if the question of privilege which the Hon. Member for Hamilton East wants to raise and the question of privilege which the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain wants to raise are the same?

Ms. Dewar: I would think so.

Mr. Speaker: I get an indication that that is so. I will hear the Hon. Member for Hamilton East first and then I will hear the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain.

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PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED DISPARAGING REMARKS BY MINISTER

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, you will know that in fact the issue of the comments raised by the Hon. Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) was originally brought to the attention of the Speaker last week when I returned from British Columbia where I participated in debate with the Minister.

I think it is important to read the Minister's remarks into the record. His opening comments were: "Mr. Chairman, fellow debaters"—and this is from a member of the Government who is representing the Government on the trade debate—"it appears that Sheila's broom is not working today.