

Oral Questions

Yesterday, the Minister of Health said with respect to hepatitis C, and I quote: "I can tell you that the hon. member recognizes that there are many jurisdictions involved in this issue. We are eagerly awaiting Justice Krever's recommendations on contacting individuals infected with hepatitis C".

How can the minister justify the decision not to trace hepatitis C carriers before 1990 by the fact that there were several jurisdictions involved, when the decision made arbitrarily at the time to stop traceback was made by the Red Cross alone?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that Health Canada is responsible for monitoring the safety of blood products. It is true several jurisdictions are involved, especially the provinces, which have a responsibility with respect to traceback.

I must say that a number of provinces have started to get involved in hepatitis C traceback, including British Columbia and a number of hospitals in other provinces.

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*[English]***EXPO 2005**

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, two Canadian cities are competing for the right to bid on hosting Expo 2005. They are anxiously waiting for the heritage minister to announce which city will win that right. The minister said he would announce his decision by the end of March. We are still waiting.

A lot of citizens have worked hard on these bids. Will the minister end the suspense here and now? Is it Calgary or Ottawa?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, consideration of this issue is making good progress. It has now reached ministerial level where it is being discussed.

We are quite conscious of the great anxiety of the bidding groups. They shall be informed of the results of the ministerial consideration as soon as possible.

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THE BUDGET

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance who I think will agree that his budget has taken us down an unprecedented course.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

An hon. member: There will never be a Liberal elected in Saskatchewan again.

Mr. Riis: There was no significant change in monetary policy in the budget. There was tinkering with the tax system only in

terms of reform. The main thrust has been through massive cuts to social programs, actually all government programs.

Presuming that this is to lead to economic prosperity and job creation, will the minister tell us what country and what government he used as a model to demonstrate that this approach actually works and is successful?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for having begun his question so well.

We engaged in an analysis of Canada's economic needs, the circumstances within which we found ourselves and the government's overwhelming commitment to see job creation made the priority focus of the country. I think that is the reason why the budget has been so well received. It is as a result of this budget that the economic recovery will continue and Canadians will begin to do in the context of the rest of the world what we as Liberals have always felt they could do, and that is to take on anybody.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, farmers and companies in the agri-food sector in my constituency of Lincoln recognize the change taking place in the Canadian agricultural sector, in particular the need to expand our export markets.

Canadian farmers are looking to this government to ensure international agricultural trade reaches the \$20-billion level by the year 2000.

Will the minister of agriculture explain what tangible results Canadian farmers and the agri-food sector expect from his recent visit to Chile, Argentina and Brazil?

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I returned from a 10-day trade mission in South America, visiting the countries referred to in the question. It was a most successful trade mission, particularly because it not only involved representatives of the Government of Canada but also representatives of three provinces, Quebec, Alberta and Saskatchewan, plus representatives of close to 30 leaders of Canadian farm organizations and Canadian agri-businesses. It was truly in the spirit of Team Canada referred to by the Prime Minister.

There were some specific transactions concluded by the business delegation during the course of the trip. A foundation was laid for many more transactions in the future. We made progress on issues such as trade-distorting export subsidies and vital sanitary procedures.