

Oral Questions

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I had a conversation with Mrs. Clinton, and Mrs. Clinton expressed broad support for the approach that Canada has taken in ensuring that universal health care is a cornerstone of public policy in this country.

As a result of that conversation we have agreed to share information. I have been in discussions with our Minister of Health. In fact I am receiving from Mrs. Clinton some good ideas about how their operations are going to work once they are able to break through the kinds of logjams of lobbies that have unfortunately stymied the American health system to date.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I believe some day the government will learn that Canadians are more impressed by and more desirous of an efficient, compassionate health care system than they are with a name dropping Deputy Prime Minister.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I am sure the hon. member will want to put his question.

Mr. Strahl: My supplementary question is for the Minister of Health.

In June the Prime Minister will be chairing a national forum on health care. At that time will the Minister of Health be prepared to open the Canada Health Act and amend it if the forum says it is necessary?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have just spent the last months meeting with ministers of health from across the country. At no time has one minister of health asked me specifically to reopen the Canada Health Act. As a matter of fact I have actually been asked to strengthen it.

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[Translation]

PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY

Mr. Robert Bertrand (Pontiac—Gatineau—Labelle): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment.

For some time, the minister has been negotiating with provinces to harmonize the implementation of the regulations in the pulp and paper industry. Can the minister give the House a status report on that very important issue?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to announce that I signed with my Quebec counterpart, the Minister of Environment and Wildlife, the first agreement in Canada to bring regulations on the pulp and paper industry together in one place.

• (1155)

But harmonization does not limit itself to the province of Quebec. We expect to sign a similar agreement with all the Atlantic provinces at the end of May. Negotiations with Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are going well and we expect to have a similar agreement with these provinces within the next two months.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of National Defence. A \$365 million contract for the procurement of heavy logistic vehicles ending in 1995 has been entered into with UTDC providing that this company guarantee economic spin-off estimated at 156,6 million dollars. However, when the last vehicle was delivered, in May 1992, only \$16,7 million had accrued to the government.

Since that contract is almost over, could the minister of National Defence tell us why that company has not met the federal government requirements with respect to the \$156,6 million economic spin-off that had been promised?

[English]

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat amused the Bloc Québécois, a party that campaigned in the federal election campaign for reduction of defence expenditures by 25 per cent, is so preoccupied with defence contract matters.

With respect to the specific question the hon. member raises, I should tell him that about 50,000 contracts are let at national defence. There are about \$2 billion to \$3 billion worth of acquisitions on the go at any one time.

I do not have the details to answer the hon. member's question, but I am sure like many of the questions that party has posed in the House it is based on false premises. However I will get the answer to satisfy him.

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, since the minister of National Defence is not able to answer my question today, could he tell us when a report on the nature of the economic spin-off will be available?

[English]

Hon. David Michael Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, again I will get that information for the hon. member.

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NATIONAL REVENUE

Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.