

Privilege

say that we are conducting these discussions with a very high regard for Canadian interests which will be defended in all aspects of the continuing discussions.

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HEALTH

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. It concerns the budgetary betrayal of federal funding promises to B.C. and other provinces with a community action program for children or CAPC, a program for vulnerable and at risk children.

In view of the profound concerns of the B.C. Coalition for Children and the B.C. government arising from drastic cuts in funding for 1996 and beyond, how can the minister justify the decision to cut the deficit on the backs of poor and vulnerable children?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very concerned that children be treated equally and fairly.

The budget did not dramatically cut CAPC. It reduced the actual growth of the program. That program will be distributed equally across the country.

● (1500)

We also have other programs aimed at helping poor children in this country. One of them is the aboriginal head start program. We have the prenatal nutrition program and the brighter futures program. All of these programs come into play as well.

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[Translation]

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Dan McTeague (Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Health.

[English]

Fifteen thousand Canadians suffer from multiple sclerosis. In the U.S., the drug Betaseron has been used to treat MS for over a year. Betaseron is currently being reviewed by the health protection branch and can only be obtained under the emergency drug release program at a cost of over \$17,000.

Can the minister provide information on when Betaseron will be made available to Canadian MS victims at a price they can afford?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the needs of victims of multiple sclerosis.

Unfortunately, the manufacturers of Betaseron chose not to apply to have the drug approved here in Canada at the same time as they did in the U.S. When they did apply we fast tracked the

approval of this drug. The price of this drug is quite high. It is under review at this time by the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board.

The Speaker: My colleagues, this brings to a conclusion our question period. I have a question of privilege from the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

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[Translation]

PRIVILEGE

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT—SALVAGING OF THE *IRVING WHALE*

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of the Environment stated in this House, when she answered a question on the refloating of the *Irving Whale*, and I quote: "I just wanted to remind the hon. members that the first report proposing salvage measures was tabled in 1989 and rejected by the then Minister of the Environment".

Later on, she also said about the *Irving Whale*: "six years after the first report was presented to the former environment minister—the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean".

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that I resigned as environment minister in May 1990 and that the report mentioned by the minister was tabled in September 1990. Her statement is therefore totally false and inaccurate.

Mr. Young: But in any case, you did nothing.

Mr. Bouchard: I hear other ministers say that she was right to lie to the House.

Mr. Young: You did nothing when you were there.

The Speaker: My colleagues, I do not think I heard everything the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, but if the word "lie" was indeed used, I would urge the hon. Leader of the Opposition to reconsider the use of that word.

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, I have reconsidered, and I gladly withdraw.

I would ask that, in that same spirit, the transport minister withdraw his remarks that the environment minister was right yesterday to twist the truth around.

Mr. Young: You did nothing.

Mr. Bouchard: It is not over yet.

Mr. Young: That is for sure.

The Speaker: Order. The hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, what happened yesterday is even more serious. It is so because I submit to the Chair that this inaccuracy was stated on purpose. The minister had the report in front of her at the time, and it indicates the date I just gave.