

*Adjournment Debate*

want to thank the hon. member for Fort William (Mr. McRae) for raising this important subject this evening. I can certainly understand his concern in view of the alarming reports that have appeared recently.

Officials of the Department of the Environment have been monitoring this situation carefully. The Canada Centre for Inland Waters has carried out water sampling and analyses in the Thunder Bay area specifically, and the Lake Superior area generally, in order to evaluate the possibility of trans-boundary movement of asbestos fibres in Lake Superior.

It has been found that the north shore of the western arm of the lake showed concentrated amounts of cummingtonite fibres associated with the mining operation at Silver Bay, Minnesota. However, at Thunder Bay, Ontario, no cummingtonite fibres were monitored. Chrysotile fibres, however, were found and these are normally associated with the natural processes involved in the weathering of rocks in the area. As well, the general circulation of the water in Lake Superior is a counter-clockwise action, tending to carry any material from the Silver Bay mining operation towards Duluth, Minnesota, and the south side of the lake, rather than towards Thunder Bay on the Ontario side.

The variation of sample analyses mentioned by the hon. member is quite possible because the behaviour of suspensions of fine particles in water is such that wind agitation of the lake could re-suspend fibres which had settled to the bottom, and analytical results would thus vary depending on the wind and the weather, and this was mentioned by the hon. member.

The Department of the Environment, the Department of National Health and Welfare, and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment are continuing to carry out research with respect to asbestos fibres.

The Great Lakes Research Advisory Board which reported to the International Joint Commission will also continue to monitor the progress of ongoing research as it relates to the Great Lakes, report it to the commission, and recommend directions for future research.

NATIONAL DEFENCE—AGRICULTURE—REQUEST  
GOVERNMENT NOT MAKE CHANGE IN GRADES OF BEEF  
PURCHASED FOR ARMED FORCES

**Mr. Ken Hurlburt (Lethbridge):** Madam Speaker, on February 24 I asked the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer) a question about the new tendering policy being followed when purchasing beef for use by the Canadian armed forces. This question is recorded at page 3499 of *Hansard*. At that time I asked the minister why the new tenders call for grades A1 and A2, since the previous tenders called for grades B1 and B2. This change in tendering is costing the taxpayers of Canada an additional \$60 to \$70 per carcass.

The minister replied to my question by saying:

Mr. Speaker, I will certainly examine with interest the impact of that policy and check with my colleague, the Minister of National Defence, what were the department's requisitions.

I have yet to receive a reply from the Minister of Supply and Services. Since the new grading system has been

adopted, absolute chaos has resulted in the cattle industry. First, the industry has been paid off with a price differential as high as 37 cents per pound on the same grade animal. Second, the buying public has been led to believe that they are purchasing better quality beef when buying grades A1 or A2. To the contrary, grades B1 and B2 carry a higher degree of marbling and finish.

The previous policy of the Department of Supply and Services had been to purchase grades B1 and B2. When these grades were in short supply, the department then purchased A1 and A2. This policy did a great deal to facilitate the feeding and processing industries in Canada by allowing a choice in grades, which helped to alleviate congestion in the processing plants across Canada.

● (2210)

I directed a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan). At that time I asked the minister whether he would make a representation to the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer), and ask him to revert to the previous tendering policy in order to help not only the beef producers but consumers as well. The answer given by the minister, which can be found at page 3,500 of *Hansard*, was as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I am given to understand that Canadian meats are always used when they are available, regardless of the department to which they are supplied.

When talking to members of the staff in the Department of Supply and Services they informed me that beef purchased for use by the Canadian armed forces in Europe is purchased from the United States government.

Questions are being asked, not only by myself, but by cattlemen in every province in Canada. First, why does the minister not know the formula for purchasing beef? Second, why does the Minister of Supply and Services not know the difference in cost between grade A and grade B beef? Third, why does the minister not know the amount of space available for cargo in the armed forces Boeing 707 jets used in their weekly flights to Lahr, Germany? The next question Canadian cattlemen would like answered is: why it is that after the astronomical losses which have been experienced by the beef industry during the last 18 months, the Minister of Agriculture does not know that Canadian servicemen are not eating Canadian beef?

In conclusion, I feel that my only hope now to obtain a satisfactory answer lies with the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson), who has promised me that an investigation by his department would be forthcoming.

**Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence):** Madam Speaker, may I first say that the Canadian Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson) and the Canadian Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) are very interested in having the Canadian Armed Forces well fed.

By way of background information, the percentages of beef by grades raised in Canada in 1974 were as follows: grade A, 74 per cent; grade B, 3.7 per cent; grade C, 2.8 per cent; grade D, 17 per cent; grade E, 2.5 per cent. The figures since January 1, 1975, are not much different in that only 4 per cent of total beef killed in Canada for the period January 1 to March 15, 1975 was grade B beef.