

Oral Questions

to treat patients in their care can do so through the Emergency Drug Distribution Program.

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, I personally met with the minister. I wrote to her. I asked her a question in the House yesterday. I ask her the same question again today: When will BioVac have its approval? When? Is that clear?

[English]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, let me remind the hon. member that my function is to ensure that any medication which receives a notice of compliance is safe and efficacious.

I will only issue a notice of compliance when my department and scientists are absolutely sure it is safe for the people of Canada.

That is the process we follow. It is the process we will continue to follow.

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IMMIGRATION

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of immigration.

It has been revealed that one of the individuals arrested in Toronto in connection with the Just Desserts killing had an ongoing involvement with Canadian immigration officials and the minister's department.

This individual had been ordered deported in 1992 but had been given a stay of proceedings on that deportation order again by the minister's department in 1993. Had this individual been deported on time he would not have been charged in connection with the murder of Georgina Leimonis.

Why was this individual given a stay on his deportation order in 1993 by the minister's department?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this is a difficult situation. We should be careful and try not to be in contempt of court so as not to prejudice this very important case many Canadians are looking at. Let me say this tragedy moved more than the city of metropolitan Toronto. It moved the whole country to think about that senseless killing.

Let me also put into focus this department moved on the basis of inadmissibility grounds to deport that individual. I can tell the hon. member and this House I believe when we moved to deport that individual the case was made before an immigration appeal member. This is not controlled by my department but is a quasi-judicial independent tribunal.

I will say the system failed us on this case. That strengthens my convictions that the amendments I have been discussing with

my officials to strengthen the criminality provisions and to close the loopholes are the right course.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast): Mr. Speaker, the individual in question was issued a stay on his deportation order in 1993 despite the fact he had a criminal record as long as his arm, and that was with the knowledge of the department.

● (1435)

When will the minister finally acknowledge that his department's system of background checks and enforcement is not working? How many more lives are going to be lost before the minister takes action to ensure the safety of Canadians?

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, this member of Parliament does a disservice to the facts of the issue and to the concerns both of us and both sides of this House share. You do not have a monopoly on concern—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: I would remind hon. colleagues to please address the Chair.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, my department wanted and pushed for deportation. An independent quasi-judicial body stayed the deportation. The adjudicator who made that decision was not reappointed to that board. She was not reappointed by this minister. Therefore we need no lessons from the hon. member.

[Translation]

DEFENCE INDUSTRY PRODUCTIVITY PROGRAM

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette): Mr. Speaker, in the past, the Liberal government has recognized on numerous occasions the need to set up a reconversion assistance program for the defence industry. Indeed, the situation of these companies is very precarious and no specific assistance is currently provided to those interested in restructuring their operations.

Does the Minister of Industry recognize that the defence industry productivity program, or DIPP, does not provide any specific assistance for conversion purposes, and that the defence industry wants a fund to be set up, using money from the current DIPP budget to support conversion initiatives? Indeed, the budget of this program should be used for that purpose.

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear the hon. member refer to that project, because the rules regulating DIPP will be expanded so as to include conversion projects for the defence industry.

Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the minister is referring to the future, because right now this program cannot be used to support conversion initiatives by these companies.