

Oral Questions

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): No, Mr. Speaker, I will not. If the Hon. Member were to take a look he would see that 200,000 spaces will be created over the next seven years. Those are only subsidized spaces, not to mention the other spaces that are being created.

Additionally, I would suggest to him that he should indicate to his Party's Member on the committee that there should be some co-operation to get the legislation passed so that the money can start flowing.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER REDRAFT LEGISLATION

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, the Minister must realize that rather than being part of the solution that legislation is adding to the problem. If the Minister is not prepared to listen to Members of Parliament will he at least listen to Canadian families? Will he listen to the Mayor of Toronto? Will he listen to Canada's children? Will he go back to the drawing-board to improve this legislation?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I have listened to Canadian parents. I have listened to the parliamentary committee and its recommendations. The legislation has been following those recommendations very closely. The legislation has been approved in principle in this House. I suggest that what is being done now is that \$6.4 billion is being targeted for child care over seven years, whereas at the present time the federal Government is spending \$160 million. That is a 100 per cent increase in the last four years that this Government has been in office.

The Hon. Member's Party should start to support such legislation. It should start to support that kind of money. It should not say with respect to the 200,000 spaces that the NDP program of 200,000 spaces is more than the Government's.

Members of that Party should get off the rhetoric which says that on the one hand they are trying to be financially responsible while on the other by the year 2000 they will have an \$11 billion bill which will somehow come out of thin air and that taxpayers support it. Less than 10 per cent of Canadians support the program of that Party which is why it was rejected by the Government, as well as for other reasons.

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HEALTH

REPORTED CONTAMINATION OF MEAT USED IN HAMBURGERS

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of State for Agriculture. In view of

recent press reports that a disease called hamburger disease, or HUS, is causing severe health problems and deaths in senior citizens and young people, and that it is caused by meat contaminated by the E coli bacteria, can the Minister tell the House whether any special precautions are being taken in Canadian meat packing plants that are inspected by the federal Government to ensure that this contamination is not causing these serious illnesses and deaths which have occurred in Canada this year?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. It gives me an opportunity as Minister of Health to indicate again to all Canadians that proper handling of food is essential. We have had a number of E coli outbreaks, as the Hon. Member has mentioned.

Additionally, the Canadian Government through the Department of National Health and Welfare and the LCDC has been co-operating with Public Health officials. We have put forward a warning again that proper storage, handling and preparation of food are necessary. I thank the Hon. Member for raising this issue which has given me the opportunity to make that point again.

MEAT PACKING PLANT OPERATIONS

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health clarify whether any review has taken place with regard to the operation of meat packing plants? Has there been any new commitment of funds by his Department for research to develop a serum or a vaccine for this disease? Just how extensive will the program of public information be to ensure that as few children as possible are infected by this bacterium and the toxin that it produces?

● (1500)

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Hon. Member that LCDC is providing all laboratory assistance required to provide identification of organisms or toxins. We also have an epidemiologist on the site to assist in the investigation, as well as to contain the outbreak.

As I stated earlier, additionally, we have said to provincial health authorities that any further information that can be given, or any technical help that can be provided, we will do that as well.

In respect of any anti-serum, I would have to take cognizance of that part of the question and make further inquiries.