

Oral Questions

ahead, would it consider combining the redistribution with the modest 10 per cent reduction to the number of seats that the Reform Party has proposed?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the increase in seats that would come into effect, not just in the bill he is talking about but in the redistribution process that was interrupted by it, is provided for in a formula in the Constitution of Canada.

This government does not propose opening a new round of constitutional discussions. I am surprised my hon. friend wants to take up the time of the country with a new round of constitutional discussions. I am sure the people of Ontario and British Columbia would be most displeased and disheartened to learn that he does not want them to have fair representation in the Parliament of Canada.

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[Translation]

BOVINE SOMATOTROPIN

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

In response to the Official Opposition's questions in the House regarding the fraudulent use of the growth hormone somatotropin, the Minister of Agriculture announced close to a month ago that he would investigate dairy producers and single out the ones that are guilty of fraud.

Will the minister tell us whether, as part of his inquiry, he requested and obtained the collaboration of producers' associations, Canada Customs officers and Health Canada inspectors, and will he reveal to us the fruit of his research?

[English]

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can inform the hon. member that no further information has been drawn to my attention since the issue was first raised a number of days ago in the House.

The issue is obviously one, as he implies in his question, that would involve co-operation among a number of departments, most particularly the two departments he referred to, the Department of Health and the customs department.

If and when there is further pertinent material that is drawn to my attention as a result of the inquiries we are making, I would be most happy to inform him and all other hon. members.

• (1135)

[Translation]

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that the minister has already had the question in his hands for one month, not just for a couple of days and that we are waiting for the results.

Will the minister tell us whether, as a follow up to his inquiry, he intends to pursue this issue further and to take legal action against those who used somatotropin illegally, given that the hormone had not yet been declared safe by Health Canada?

[English]

Hon. Ralph E. Goodale (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at this point I think it would be imprudent and inappropriate to make any references to the possibility of illegal conduct.

Obviously if in the course of these inquiries or any other inquiries that are being made there is evidence that comes to light of activity that would be in violation of the law, the appropriate action would be taken.

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EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

All the polls and pundits have indicated that a major reason behind Mike Harris' victory last night in Ontario was due to his position on employment equity. He was not messing around; he said he was going to scrap the employment equity plan.

On this side of the House we are very interested to know if the federal government is going to take a lesson from this victory last night. I realize that the Charest-Mulroney gang brought in employment equity, but is this government going to stop now trying to bring in an expanded employment equity plan? Will it withdraw its plans on Bill C-64?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member had better make up his mind. His colleagues were running around saying that the victory was as a result of gun control.

The Speaker: My colleagues, just to remind you very gently, when we refer to each other in the House, sitting members, we refer to our ridings as opposed to our names.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I suppose there are quite a few Reform policies that got the Mike Harris government elected.

The director of communications for the Prime Minister's office said that the federal Liberals would be helping the Ontario