

*Oral Questions*

## REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT-UNION MEETING

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox—Powell River):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. There has been a request today for officials of the Government to meet with unionized employees in the Devco operation. Will the Deputy Prime Minister give an undertaking that this will happen and the Government will make a commitment to those jobs?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is aware that union elections will take place in that area tomorrow. I think it would be inappropriate for the Government or officials of the Government to intervene at this time, particularly given the fact that we have a mechanism in place wherein these issues can be discussed and resolved and, hopefully, satisfactory solutions reached.

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## AGRICULTURE

## PRODUCTION OF READY-TO-EAT PRODUCTS AT EDMONTON PLANT

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Will he confirm that ready-to-eat meat production at the strikebound Gainer's plant in Edmonton began last week in violation of a federal Government meat inspection guideline which states that: "Plant employees shall, under no circumstances, be permitted to handle ready-to-eat meat products prior to obtaining satisfactory certification on medical grounds."?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I would have appreciated it if the Hon. Member had extended the courtesy of giving me notice of this question. It would have provided me with an opportunity to check with my senior officials. My information is that we have violated no Act at that plant or any other plant.

## GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, why did Bill Rees, Vice-President of Operations, confirm to my office today that ready-to-eat meat production began last Wednesday, when the chief veterinarian responsible for inspection services advised my office today that the appropriate medicals were not made until Thursday, the day after meat production began, in violation of federal government guidelines?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I take this question very seriously because we have the finest meat and food inspection system in the world. It is not perfect, and officials are always striving to improve it. I have checked

with my Deputy Minister from time to time as to the progress and status of the plant at Red Deer and the Gainer's plant in Edmonton. We had some very difficult situations there from time to time, but my information at this point is that we have not violated any Act or regulation. However, I would not want that to stand as a final response to a very serious question. I will take notice and be happy to get back to the Hon. Member.

## REQUEST THAT INSPECTION PROCEDURES BE STRENGTHENED

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Agriculture and concerns the same subject. In light of the fact that these scabs are inexperienced and are replacing experienced workers, will the Minister tell the House what steps he will take to ensure that the inspection procedures will be beefed up—pardon the pun—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Rodriguez:** —to ensure that the health of the public is protected?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I take that question seriously as well, but perhaps the Hon. Member might be interested to know that it is a pork processing plant and does not process beef. Quite properly, senior officials of my Department have been in constant contact and observing the difficulties at both plants. Again the information I have is that they have overseen the operations of the plant. At no time that I am aware of, did slaughtering take place when it should not have taken place.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** I thank the Minister for not hamming it up.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

## REQUEST FOR TABLING OF DIRECTIVES

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, is the Minister prepared to table in the House the exact procedures which his Department will use to ensure that these inexperienced scabs who are operating in that Gainer's plant are in fact following the directives of the Food Production and Inspection Branch? Will he table the procedures that his Department will undertake?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty in making a commitment to table that information. We have been involved in two similar situations and the Department has always been anxious to table the information. We have been held back on one account because of an injunction lodged against the Department by certain people within the industry, but if that does not happen again, and if we are not impaired in any way from making the information available, we will be happy to do so.