

DDD, because the whole nation could be poisoned through their uncontrolled use.

Why has the Department of Agriculture taken this regressive measure, extending the use of DDD to January 1, 1972? Has the department been taken in by the poison manufacturers so that they may get rid of their existing stocks? The news release suggests this is what has happened and that after that date new stocks will be denied registration. The government should not allow the continued use of existing stocks of this poison, in the interests of human life, wildlife and marine life.

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to commend the hon. gentleman for raising this question because it gives us an opportunity to put the record straight. The article in the *Ottawa Citizen* of October 10 was based on a false assumption.

With regard to the questions raised by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) concerning the pesticide DDD, also called TDE, I may say that this product had a limited use and has now been largely superseded by newer and more effective products. Thus, in the continuing assessment process that goes on for all pesticides it was decided that DDD should be phased out. This decision was communicated to the trade under date of August 27. Unfortunately, the wording of the notice was such as to imply cancellation of registration status as of January 1, 1971. This notice was replaced by a further notice dated October 1, 1970, which clarified the phasing-out schedule and outlined provisions for normal disposal through sale of remaining stocks, and indicated that there would be no registration of DDD stocks manufactured in the year 1971. In other words, as of January 1, 1971, the department will not approve the manufacture of DDD.

With regard to the question raised by the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg), I can assure the hon. member that there is no change in our intention to keep the public informed on the status of pesticides. Indeed, we are currently reviewing our information procedures with a view to improving communication and understanding. We are assessing the relative roles of letters to the trade and of broader information statements to the public.

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY—STEINBERG WAGE INCREASES—
CLARIFICATION OF CHAIRMAN OF PRICES AND INCOMES
COMMISSION OF EFFECT ON PRICES

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, on October 7, Mel Dobrin, President of Steinberg's Limited, sent the following telegram to Dr. John H. Young of the Prices and Incomes Commission:

I am astonished at the contents of a news bulletin released by your commission today and carried on radio stations and reported to the press wherein you are reported as having denounced pay settlements in major grocery chains including Steinberg's Limited as being "excessive, unjustified and inflationary", and in which you are also reported as having said that "customers will have to pay the shot in higher food prices." As far as Steinberg's Limited is concerned the settlements referred to

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were made with the collective bargaining agents for our Ontario division store employees after lengthy and conscientious negotiations. The extent of the settlements was made known to you in advance of the signing of the collective agreements and your commission was given both verbal and written assurances that Steinberg's would do everything possible to avoid increasing prices as a result of such wage increases. Your representatives have met regularly with members of our organization and have been kept informed concerning our prices and operating margins. You therefore must be aware that at no time repeat at no time has Steinberg's Limited increased its prices directly or indirectly as a result of these negotiated increases. We have in fact reduced prices further since such wage settlements and are now operating at lower gross margins than those in effect prior to the settlements.

Your comments in so far as our company is concerned are inaccurate, misleading and unfair. We would appreciate your issuing a statement which would make the facts clear to our customers and the public at large.

On October 14 I asked the minister if he would discuss with Dr. Young the necessity of issuing a statement to set the matter straight and to make amends for the inaccurate statement he had made. The minister brushed off my question with a quip and a reference to the consumer price index which had just been released. More important, no answer has been received by the Steinberg firm since that time. I checked this today; I have been keeping in contact with them. The facts are that Steinberg's went through the proper collective bargaining procedure with employees who received wage increases; Steinberg's did not raise prices as a result of those wage increases. Dr. Young's statement is not in accord with the facts, and a correction should be issued.

I again ask the minister whether he will take action. His responsibility is clear. The Prices and Incomes Commission reports to Parliament through the minister. What is his objection to using moral suasion on Dr. Young to persuade him to set matters right? Surely both of them should be glad to find a firm prepared to cut their profit margin in order to give better wages to their employers without raising prices to the consumer. This is a matter which should be given publicity instead of inaccurate statements being made.

In any event, it is highly debatable whether Dr. Young has exceeded the terms of his authority in denouncing the actions of Steinberg's. In outlining the proposed terms of reference of the commission two years ago, the minister stated:

It is particularly important to stress that the commission will not, except in cases involving the national interest in a vital way, be expected to report on the specific price decisions of individual firms or the wage decisions of particular collective bargaining situations.

In outlining the terms of reference of the Commission, the minister made it perfectly clear that it was not within the purview of the chairman to make statements regarding individual firms. If this was in the mind of the minister when the commission was set up, it is doubly important that the minister exercise his responsibility and ensure the public is not left with the impression that the statement was correct.

The minister said it was peculiar that I should be defending the Steinberg firm. I will defend any firm,