

Oral Questions

presently, and there are discussions going on between Mr. Klug and government officials at the present time.

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• (1500)

HEALTH

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, when the Minister of National Health and Welfare responded to questions regarding the safety of the Meme breast implant, about which serious questions have been raised, he twice said:

Statistics show that the failure rate among the Meme breast implants is considerably lower than among every other silicone breast implant.

As a recovered breast cancer victim and patient who has had a silicone implant, I want to ask the minister on behalf of the one in ten Canadian women who will face breast cancer and possibly face the very difficult choice of having a breast implant, could he please tell us definitively that silicone breast implants are safe?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, when Dr. Carolyn Kerrigan did a study for the department last year, one of the things she said was this:

There is an urgent need for controlled experimental studies of breast implants to address countless issues regarding their usage. Mandatory information concerning implant composition, degradation, excretion, placement, contracture, infection and others must be determined on a clinically applicable animal model.

The FDA in the United States is doing continuing research with regard to all implants. We are also paying for work to be done in Canada as well.

We will undertake to make every possible effort to ensure that any implant, whether breast implants or other surgical devices, is safe and efficacious before being implanted in Canadians.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, am I to believe then, as a result of the kinds of answers we had yesterday and today, that Canadian women are being used in place of animals for testing implants?

The minister should be aware of the fear he has created by raising and coupling silicone implants with the Meme implant.

He should also be aware that there is a difference between failure and danger. The Meme implant, we are being told, is in fact possibly carcinogenic.

Women who have faced cancer do not need the fear of possibly facing it again as a result of part of the corrective surgery.

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that the House understand who is raising these fears, and who is suggesting that there is a danger to Canadian women.

It is not I who is suggesting that. It is her colleague who is sitting directly in front of her.

It was her colleague who held a press conference on Monday in which he gave out information. My department to date in looking at his material has found over 20 instances where that information is incorrect.

I offered to give the hon. gentleman a full briefing where all the questions that he had could be answered. Typically, the hon. member did not ask for it first. We had to offer it to him. He has agreed, finally, to have it. I would even indicate to the hon. member as well that she would be welcome to attend as well.

We are confident in the safety of these devices. Instead of raising concerns among Canadian women, and creating false fears, let us work together to get information. Let us have accurate information. Let us not create false fears among women.

Ms. Langan: Then you should be accurate in the House.

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[*Translation*]

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Canada cannot afford to remain silent when faced with the threat of proliferation and excessive use of chemical weapons in the world. More specifically, the threats by Iraq against Israel are very disturbing and reflect a situation that Canada cannot condone.

Yesterday, in answer to a question on this topic, the minister's parliamentary secretary said: