

*Oral Questions*

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

**Mr. Fraser:**—and because there are public concerns about the acceptability of the disputed stocks for consumers, I have today asked my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, to invoke the power of the Food and Drug Act and to effect the seizure of the disputed product.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Better late than never. It is a number of months too late but we on this side of the House welcome that statement. In the circumstances, we will review the situation and see how effective it is.

I want to say to the Minister, on behalf of a number of people who telephoned my office, particularly Richard McColl of Killaloe Station in the Ottawa Valley, who was sick all night a few months ago after eating a tin of Bye The Sea tuna, that he and thousands of others of Canadians will be relieved that the Minister is taking strong action—belatedly and too late, but finally.

**Some Hon. Members:** Question.

**Mr. McDermid:** What is the question?

**Mr. Speaker:** That being no one else rising to ask questions—oh, the Hon. Member for Oshawa.

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

**Mr. Blackburn (Brant):** The whole House is exhausted.

## DISCRETIONARY POWERS OF MINISTERS

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to say it is good to see the Government do something. Even though it is acting late, it is now going to be done.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister and it concerns the discretionary power which would still reside with the Minister. It is still possible for a Minister, on his discretionary authority, to reach a decision which could see food substances going on the shelves of stores all across Canada which could technically be described as unfit for human consumption. Therefore, will the Prime Minister take steps to ensure that that kind of discretionary power will not reside with a Minister of the Crown?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister, in the course of his review of various aspects of federal operations, pointed out some time ago in a preliminary report the almost inherent conflict of interest which exists in some situations where various Ministries are called upon to pass value judgments upon products under their legislative purview. One of the recommendations he is bringing forward is to centralize this capacity for review and judgment in the Department of National Health and Welfare. I think that is a recommendation that most Members would look upon with favour.

● (1420)

## CENTRALIZATION OF POWERS

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister would say, in the spirit in which he answered that question I would like to ask him another one just so that we are very clear. Is the Prime Minister telling the House that the discretionary authority which currently resides with a Minister of the Crown to make a decision that has health implications is going to be removed and put into the Ministry of Health and Welfare?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, the discretionary authority which the Hon. Member is speaking of resides in several Departments including those of Agriculture, Corporate and Consumer Affairs, Fisheries and Oceans, and Health and Welfare. The thrust of the recommendation that will be brought forward will be to centralize these inspection services in order that a common standard and a higher degree of excellence can be achieved to ensure health and safety in inspection services throughout the broad range of government authority.

## RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to be pedantic on the point, and I understand that the thrust of what the Minister said is to turn health matters over to the Minister who has responsibility for that. However, he did not answer the question, although I am not saying it was deliberate.

The question concerns the discretionary authority specifically. Is he assuring the House that the discretionary authority, which now resides in a variety of Ministries, to make a decision over and above the technical advice on health matters, will be removed and put into the hands of the Minister of National Health and Welfare?

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, that essentially is precisely the consideration that will be brought forward to Cabinet for its decision.

**Mr. Frith:** It's about time.

**Mr. Nielsen:** It certainly is about time. It's a pity that it wasn't done many years ago.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Nielsen:** I expect that that proposal will be before Cabinet by approximately the middle of next month.

## MINISTER'S ACTION

**Mr. George Henderson (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, I too, was very pleased to hear the announcement of the Minister today. I am sure that to some extent the industry is going to be pleased