

HEALTH

EXPOSURE OF WORKERS TO CIGARETTE SMOKE

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. He will be aware of a report obtained under the Access to Information Act showing that employees in nearly all offices under federal jurisdiction are exposed to smoke pollution at unacceptable levels, causing very high numbers of death from lung cancer. Why is the Minister of Health not working to bring in legislation to give adequate protection to employees under federal jurisdiction? Why is he instead suppressing the information that shows just how high is the level of risk?

• (1450)

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): First, Mr. Speaker, this Minister is not suppressing the information. The information that was received under Access to Information was in draft form. I have full intention of releasing it. Second, we are looking to publishing it in a scientific journal. That will be done.

I think the Member, if she is fair about it, knows this Government and this Minister have been very active in the area not only of passive smoking but of smoking generally. We want to reduce its incidence.

The report, I think, verifies many of the things that the Hon. Member, I, and others have said. In terms of legislation, possibly the Member should just be a little patient for that.

SMOKE-FREE OFFICES—ECONOMIC SAVINGS

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It concerns another study obtained under Access to Information on the effects of smoke. Will the Minister concede the number of millions of dollars which these studies show could be saved by bringing in smoke-free provisions?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, quite frankly I am not quite clear to which study the Hon. Member is now referring. I can tell her that when people look at the revenue Government receives from tobacco taxes, that figure, even though it is high in terms of the Budget, is considerably lower than the loss in revenue in health care and other tangential costs, not to mention productivity costs.

If the Hon. Member has another study in mind, I wish she would be a little more specific about it.

Oral Questions

IMMIGRATION

ALLEGED PRACTICES BY OFFICIAL AT TORONTO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mrs. Pauline Browes (Scarborough Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Recent publicity alluding to improper practices by Immigration officers at Toronto International Airport have raised serious concern about the immigration process at the airport. Could the Minister comment on these alleged practices, and assure the House that they will no longer continue?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member says, these comments are alleged. I will treat them as allegations.

I want to assure the House, however, that such practice is not the policy of the Department of Employment and Immigration. If anyone has any evidence to the contrary, I wish they would present me with it and I will ensure that anything of that nature is stopped forthwith.

REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, officials of the Minister's own Department have admitted to various of the news media that that practice has happened and that management has condoned it.

Will the Minister of Employment and Immigration immediately cause an investigation to be established and, if those practices are occurring at the Malton International Airport and elsewhere, will she see that they are stopped immediately, rather than saying they are simple allegations and expecting that they will go away by themselves?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member has any evidence of any wrongdoing of this nature, I wish he would give it to me forthwith and I will see that it is stopped.

* * *

[Translation]

YOUTH

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION FOR DISAPPEARANCE OF CERTAIN PROGRAMS

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. I would like to know why the Minister of State (Youth) learned of the disappearance of all her youth programs in the estimates, without even getting a direct signal from the Prime Minister. Is that another example of the influence of youth, women and Quebecers in the Prime Minister's Cabinet?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Quite the opposite, Mr. Speaker. In those three cases indeed, the Hon. Member is—inadvertently no doubt—misleading the House. In