

could not have known to be so since he informed the Canadian public that no meat seizures had taken place. In fact, the hon. member knew full well, in light of the press release that had been issued for at least a week that more than 210 tons of meat had been seized in Quebec.

As to the question raised by the hon. member, I must reiterate that my officials were the instigators of the investigation conducted by the police. I have no reason to doubt their honesty, integrity and devotion, and I feel that the facts clearly indicate that they carried out their duties within their mandate. As for the latter part of the hon. member's question, I have no knowledge of such a special standing committee. As everyone knows, we have a police force called the RCMP that enjoys the trust of Canadians and surely that of the government. The force is under the official authority of the Solicitor General and is more than capable of carrying out its duties required for the application of Canadian legislation.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT QUEBEC CONSUMERS FROM MEAT UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary.

In addressing my supplementary to another minister, I should also like to say that I did not mislead the people when I advised them that the minister had behaved stupidly by refusing to prevent the sale of tainted meat, of which he is now aware, and by claiming that he had to wait for the end of the inquiry before acting.

I therefore put my question to a minister who is more responsible, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. At some time or other in the last two months has the Minister of National Health and Welfare or the food advisory division of the Department of National Health advised, as it should, the department to pay special attention to the sale and advertising of certain food products of which the raw material seemed of doubtful quality some time ago according to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, some federal inspectors and, if so, what has been done?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I must remind the hon. member that this matter does not fall within my responsibilities; still, I have discussed several times, with my colleague the Minister of National Health and Welfare, this matter which seems to concern the hon. member to the highest degree.

Mr. Wagner: Mr. Speaker, I have another supplementary for the learned minister.

In addition to his talks with the Minister of National Health and Welfare, has the minister done anything to help the people?

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member should not confuse the responsibilities of each minister. He seems to be doing his best not to understand or to

Oral Questions

pretend not to understand the answers given to him by the Minister of National Health and Welfare which are quite clear.

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● (1430)

[English]

HEALTH

ADEQUACY OF MINISTER'S AUTHORITY TO INSPECT MEAT SOLD FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the fact that section 4 of the Food and Drugs Act prohibits the sale of meat unfit for human consumption, and section 22 authorizes inspections by the minister's officials of any abattoir or place food is stored, can the minister indicate whether he has consulted with his legal advisors to determine whether these two sections of the act indeed give him all the authority he needs to inspect any place handling or storing food or whether there are any situations in respect of meat where he feels he does not have authority to gain access?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, again, this is a matter of legal interpretation which is out of order.

[English]

Mr. Yewchuk: Mr. Speaker, I should like to rephrase the question in another way and make it much more simple. Can the minister indicate whether he feels there is any place in Quebec where meat unfit for human consumption is being sold or that there is any abattoir or place where meat is stored in respect of which he does not have authority under the Food and Drugs Act to enforce the law.

[Translation]

Mr. Lalonde: Still the same question, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

LACK OF REGULATIONS TO PROTECT QUEBEC CONSUMERS FROM MEAT UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Yesterday the minister mislead the Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs in connection with his estimates when he said there was protection afforded to Quebec consumers by a provincial act known as the Dead Meat Act. In checking with the Quebec government today I find there is no such legislation. The Quebec officials confirmed the fact that there are no regulations protecting consumers in the province of Quebec. In light of the fact that there is no consumer protection to Quebec consumers what is the minister doing to carry out the law in respect of the statute which is his responsibility and send additional