

We have been involved in ongoing discussions with that industry as the hon. member knows. We have given support as the hon. member knows. We will continue to give that support.

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#### LEAD AND MERCURY

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Earlier this week the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs said in the House that the use of lead in paint had been eliminated by voluntary compliance by the industry. But a report from his own department contradicts this statement and says clearly that lead and mercury in paint continue to be a health hazard to children even before they are born.

Why is the government refusing to say no to lead and mercury in paint? Why is it refusing to co-operate with the industry which wants a ban and has asked the government for a ban to protect our children?

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Madam Speaker, I will take that representation on behalf of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, but my recollection is that yes, there are lots of houses that still have paint which was put on at a time when the danger of lead was not recognized, high lead content paint in renovations and so on. This represents a hazard. That is all the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs said. There is a hazard out there.

In terms of outlawing paint in any and every application, I am sure the hon. member would recognize that that makes sense when there is any chance of human contact but may not make sense when there is no chance of human contact.

• (1150)

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Madam Speaker, the minister said clearly that co-operation with the industry had eliminated the addition of lead in paints. That is simply not the case.

A spokesperson on product safety said on radio months ago that regulations were being prepared. The paint industry asked in September 1990 that the government ban the addition of lead and mercury in all new paints. The government has not acted.

To be very blunt about it, how many more children have to be poisoned before the government does what

the industry and everybody else wants and bans lead and mercury additions in paint? It is that simple.

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Madam Speaker, I do not think there is any argument. No one in this House is arguing that lead and mercury are not poisons and they should be eliminated to the extent possible so that there is no human contact.

It certainly does not do her case any good to stand up here and claim that children are dying in this country right this very moment because of lack of action. That is simply false. She knows it, and I wonder why she has to resort to scare tactics like that rather than just pursue in a logical reasonable fashion the appropriate and reasonable representation that lead and mercury be limited.

It is not necessary to go around scaring people and saying that kids are dying because of this situation.

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#### CANADA—UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture.

Previously I heard the minister indicate to this House that there had been a profound increase in the export of Canadian agricultural products as a result of the free trade agreement with the United States.

How extensive was the increase of trade with the United States? Was there any negative impact to the marketing boards that presently exist in Canada as a result of the free trade agreement?

**Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is right to draw to the attention of the House the increase in trade that took place after the free trade agreement between Canada and the U.S. took effect.

The increase in agricultural trade since January 1, 1989 was some 25 per cent. Agriculture increased some 25 per cent from that time period. That is very important when we look at the percentage of agricultural imports. The imports into Canada only increased by 16 per cent. There was a net benefit by Canada in signing the agreement between the United States in the area of agriculture.