

● (1450)

[English]

### GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

#### REQUEST FOR LIST OF PROJECTS WITH ANTICIPATED OVERRUNS

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. It arises out of an answer given by the president yesterday in which he stated:

—let me tell him that there are 497 projects now reported upon which show original budgets of \$4.752 billion with potential overruns of \$1.062 billion.

Would the President of the Treasury Board give the House of Commons a list of those 497 projects that have an anticipated overrun of \$1,062 million?

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board):** Madam Speaker, I am not in a position, nor would I take the time of the House, to furnish that list at this moment. But I will provide such a list to the hon. member. I would like to point out that the \$1.062 billion overrun figure which I cited was the total overrun for the 497 projects calculated back to the original budgets. About \$500 million of that amount has already received Treasury Board approval as of December 31, 1979. The remainder will require specific Treasury Board approval on a case-by-case basis.

That, I hope, gives the hon. member some indication on how we are moving with respect to those projects. As I said, I will not take the time of the House to provide the hon. member with a list, or more detailed information at this time, but I will be happy to comply with that request.

**Mr. Stevens:** Madam Speaker, again to the President of the Treasury Board. In view of his statement that approvals are still being made with respect to these possible overruns, would the President of the Treasury Board indicate if he is not, in fact, enforcing Treasury Board circular letter 1979-20 which dealt with cost controls and which specifically said, "Submissions for retroactive approvals will be entertained"? Why is the President of the Treasury Board contemplating approving, *post facto*, overruns which have been drawn to his attention by departments?

**Mr. Johnston:** Madam Speaker, I will be pleased to look into the matter raised by the hon. member. I understand we are looking at projects, some of which are continuing, and we are obliged to examine these on a case-by-case basis in accordance with Treasury Board requirements or in accordance with departmental authorizations where they exist. As I say, I would be more than pleased to furnish the hon. member with a complete breakdown.

### Oral Questions AGRICULTURE

#### ANTIBIOTIC AND DRUG RESIDUES IN MEAT—ABATTOIR INSPECTION

**Mr. Gus Mitges (Grey-Simcoe):** Madam Speaker, I address my question to the Minister of Agriculture. The minister made a statement in a news release regarding the presence of drug and antibiotic residues in meat for human consumption which is federally inspected at abattoirs across Canada. The minister stated in part:

Meat reaching the consumer is entirely wholesome and judging from the facts the system is working very well.

In view of the fact that in a letter which I received from the minister on May 13 he stated that in fiscal 1979-1980 only 781 normal looking beef were tested for antibiotic residues, out of a total beef slaughter of some three million head, and that only 302 normal looking hogs were tested out of a total hog slaughter of some 12 million in federally inspected abattoirs, how can the minister say to the consumers of Canada that as far as the presence of antibiotic and drug residues in meat is concerned, that the inspection system is working very well?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, perhaps I should have written a longer letter to the hon. member.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Don't make your speech any longer.

**Mr. Whelan:** After a conversation with the hon. member the other day, I made a double-check and found that there have been tests on over 10,000 different samples. I know that the hon. member knows about this situation better than I, because of his background, which is that of an educated veterinarian—

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

**Mr. Nowlan:** Are there any other kinds?

**Mr. Whelan:** I am sure that many of the hon. members' colleagues are ignorant of the fact that many farmers classify themselves as amateur veterinarians although they do not have a degree in veterinary education. I am sure that he would also agree that they do a darn good job, because he has worked with such people all of his life.

I challenge the hon. member to challenge those 10,000 tests which have been taken and the educated veterinarians in my department who gave me that information, and I will abide by that information if they tell me that it is one of the most efficient, proficient, in-depth testing programs of any country in the world.

**Mr. Mitges:** Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that of the normal cattle tested, nine-tenths of 1 per cent showed traces of antibiotic residue, and of the hogs tested, six-tenths of 1 per cent had traces of antibiotic residue. Even if we include the 10,000 cattle mentioned by the minister, it would mean that some 26,000 additional cattle and some 74,000 additional hogs would have been condemned for the presence of residue. I am