

[English]

As far as my departmental responsibility is concerned, my department does not have the responsibility of carrying the investigation itself but of looking at the safety of particular serums being used and the safety of the procedures regarding importation and distribution of serums. I must point out that up to now there is no conclusive evidence linking the two tragic deaths with any particular serum. However, as I have told the hon. member in a previous letter, officers of my department have investigated this matter and have concluded that certain blood fractions used for experimental or diagnostic purposes have on occasion been contaminated with hepatitis viruses. I also stated that there is no foolproof way to test such products to ensure that they are free from hepatitis viruses.

*Adjournment Debate*

My department is aware of the particular article referred to by the hon. member in the *Lancet* and of the particular immune radiometry experience. My department is looking into this particular testing at the present time and trying to assess how foolproof this particular test would be. At the present time we are not in a position to assure the House that this will be a foolproof test either. In the absence of appropriate tests, laboratory workers who utilize such products must take necessary precautions to ensure that they will not be exposed to undue risk. Research on the development of tests to assess the safety of blood fractions is being conducted at the present time in a number of centres in Canada and elsewhere. Pending its successful completion, persons handling such materials must take appropriate precautions.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.29 p.m.

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