

Oral Questions

• (1140)

We are well aware that seeding is coming, and we are going to do our very best to have assistance announced prior to spring seeding so that farmers will know what they are likely to get and when they are going to get it.

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[Translation]

SOLICITOR GENERAL

Mr. Charles DeBlois (Montmorency—Orléans): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. In 1979, Mrs. Annette Proulx was sentenced to life imprisonment for a murder she has always denied committing.

For the past 11 years, she has been serving her sentence at the *Maison Gomin* in Quebec City. Under normal circumstances, this woman, who will celebrate her 75th birthday on May 3rd, will be 89 years old when she comes out of prison.

Mrs. Proulx is seeking a royal pardon, because this is the only way she would be allowed out of prison before she is 89 years old.

All the people involved in this affair, including the Crown, the police, even the presiding judge, agree that Mrs. Proulx would not put society at risk because she is not likely to commit a similar crime again.

In view of this really pathetic situation and on strictly compassionate grounds, I should like to ask the hon. minister if it is true he is about to sign a letter denying her a royal pardon.

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Of course, Mr. Speaker, I have been informed of this case and I have every intention to review it before signing anything.

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[English]

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister. This has been quite a week for Connaught. In the latest chapter in the "book of revelations", Institut Mérieux confirmed today that it will not nor does it have any obligation to the people of Canada to fill the jobs of five top Canadian executives that were taken away. This is in direct

contradiction to what the minister of industry promised this House last Wednesday. I quote:

—all, or least most, of the jobs—will be filled again by Canadians.

Who is in charge? The government or Institut Mérieux?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to my hon. friend that this is a holding company which is being affected. There were five management personnel in the holding company and, with the takeover by Mérieux, one does not need the holding company.

What the opposition, the hon. member and the government are concerned about is the operating company, the actual medical company that does the research and the sales in the field. It turns out that the holding company disappears with the takeover. Those are the only jobs affected.

All the Canadian jobs that are in the operating company, Institut Mérieux has made it clear that those jobs will continue and be filled by Canadians.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, that is not what the minister promised the House on Wednesday.

One more revelation is that today the French firm announced that it would be closing the head office because it will not be needed any more. There will be no Canadian head office to protect Canada's interest and to ensure that Connaught remains a major key player in the world market-place. Overnight, Connaught has become just one more branch plant.

My question is this: Now that the French government has control of Connaught, what will the Canadian government do to protect Canada's vital economic interest for the future?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does not understand that the plant closure of those executive offices on University Avenue in Toronto reflects the fact that they will no longer be required once Connaught's interest in certain related companies have been sold. The takeover itself means one does not need to have the holding company. It is just a small company of management people.