I have in my hand a document which shows clear alarm in the department of medical devices in 1987, five years ago, five years of pain and suffering for women with defective implants.

Will the minister admit the failure of his ministry to act for Canadian women facing the need for implants or for those more particularly who already have had implants?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I could provide as many documents as the member does, but I will not because all the documents we have on breast implants have already been tabled.

We know the way the department works. I will answer at the same time the fallacies raised by the member for Hamilton East last week about that. I would like to correct what she said.

The Department of National Health and Welfare makes decisions at the bureaucratic level on whether or not to accept certain kinds of implants. The decision is not made by the minister. At no time were documents presented to the then minister to make a decision. It was made by the officials of the department, on scientific evidence, as it always is done.

All documents are provided to the people who make the decision at the departmental level. So do not say that the documents go to the minister for a decision. It never happened.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I never said that the document went to the minister. I said his department had failed. I asked him to admit that his department had failed.

Last Friday, the Minister of State for Employment and Immigration said that this government did not want to deal with the past but wanted to deal with the present and the future. Yet we have women in provinces in this country today who are unable to get the help they need to deal with failed implants. We have had not one, not two, but three Ministers of National Health and Welfare, successive ministers, who have failed to act while these women suffered. Will the minister tell us that he will ensure a woman's ability to get implants removed without having to depend on her own pocket-book and not depending on whether or not her implant was cosmetic?

Second, will the minister tell us what arrangements were made at last week's provincial health ministers meeting to ensure that Canadian women will get the care they so badly need?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the member knows very well that the silicone gel breast implant was removed from the market last January and the ban was imposed and maintained since last April.

Ms. Langan: But not on our bodies.

Mr. Bouchard (Roberval): I want to deal with that issue in the best way I can. If the member wants to listen to me, that is exactly what we are trying to do. We have put forward different studies since April. She knows that the report I received from Dr. Baines' committee asked for many recommendations which we are trying to follow in order to give women in Canada the best guarantee on any kind of breast implant. As long as we do not have the assurance, we will not permit its use again.

In the meantime, women who have already had breast implants will be asked to report to their physician. We are looking to the physicians and doctors offices as the best way to answer any questions women have. This is what we want to do and I know it is what the member wants done. If the member wants to work with me and the department, we will certainly give her the answer. Once again, it is not in the way the member works that we will find the answer.

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[*Translation*]

TRADE

Mr. David Berger (Saint-Henri—Westmount): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade and concerns the negotiations with the United States and Mexico.

On May 12, in answer to a question from my colleague from Saint-Léonard, the minister told the House that he was trying to improve the Canadian position in the textile and clothing sectors.

He said: "The basis on which we are negotiating —is to have a special access to the United States market which would be greater than the access provided under the free trade agreement".