

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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HEALTH

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of health. U.S. Food and Drug Administration researchers have found significant amounts of a cancer-causing chemical in the Meme breast implant. The researchers were so surprised at how much of the chemical 2-4 toluene diamine was released by the implant's foam covering when it decomposed that they repeated the testing and found equally large amounts of the chemical.

Will the minister finally give women of Canada a commitment, since one in 10 already faces breast cancer without having the additional risk of dangerous implants on the market, that in light of this research he will take the Meme breast implant off the market?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I assume that the hon. member's question comes from the article in today's *Montreal Gazette*.

The department has not had the opportunity as yet of studying the American report. I do not know whether the hon. member has. If she has not, she is recommending that we take the device off the market before we have had a chance to study the evidence, while it remains on the market in the United States. The FDA has left it on the market.

We do not proceed in that fashion. What we do instead is to ask for the evidence, which we have done, and to ensure that we have the opportunity ourselves to analyse that evidence. If any of the evidence indicates there is a threat to the health of Canadian women, we will take such a device off the market, which has been our policy since the outset.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to know that the government is not prepared to any longer be the wagon on the train.

Will the minister give us a time-line on how quickly it will come off the market? Once he has the evidence and has looked at this report, will he give us his commitment that women who have been the victims of the Meme implant will be warned about the dangers of the implant, as well as having it withdrawn, and will he give us a

commitment that proper testing will be done on all implants?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I will do my best to respond to the hon. member's three questions.

The fundamental issue here is whether she believes as we do that before you pick a date for pulling the implant off the market, you should see the evidence and make a judgment based on the facts.

If the hon. member is so convinced that this evidence has been in place for a long time, why has the FDA left the device on the market? Both in the United States and in Canada a review is being done of all implants that are on the market. The position remains the same. If any evidence comes forward related to any implant on the market that represents a threat to the health of Canadian women, it will be taken off the market.

• (1440)

The difference between the hon. member and members on this side is that we believe we have an obligation to see the evidence first, not simply to act first and then look for the evidence afterward.

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REFUGEES

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

The human tragedy of the Kurds is worsening by the hour. Indeed as we speak some will die.

Iraq has already stated unequivocally that it will oppose any UN protected enclaves for the Kurds. Time is running out. The countries of the world must respond now in a humanitarian and compassionate manner.

Will the minister respond to the request of the Turkish government and the pleas of the Kurds that Canada, in concert with other countries, accept as refugees some of our fellow human beings whose lives hang in the balance?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this House and this country are shocked by events in Iraq and are very much preoccupied with the situation of the Kurds.