

But, Mr. Speaker, let us all remind ourselves of the fact that in medicine and in science there has to be some information, and my officials are developing that information. I respect that, and I hope that Members would also respect that these people, when they had the information, to the best of their ability they gave it to me and I acted immediately on the information given.

Mr. Speaker: This will be the last question of Question Period. I would ask the Hon. Member for Beaches to make his questions relatively short, given the time.

REASON FOR ISSUING STOP SHIPMENT ORDER

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Was there any other reason for stopping the shipment of mussels on Sunday than the positive tests obtained from the mussels tested on Friday which, as the Minister is aware, were already on the market?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Yes, Mr. Speaker, there was additional information. I gave that earlier. I can go through that again.

On November 28, on Saturday, samples were gathered. One from St. Peters, seven from additional Atlantic areas. Destination routing was done. Lab preparation was done in Charlotte-town, was sent here to Ottawa to Dr. Todd's with Canadian International, was picked up on Sunday, identified leases. We did the maps. We also did the records, the shipping records. We tracked those. We also went on the street in Charlotte-town. We interviewed people with complaints, three as I mentioned earlier, by a member of my Department.

That was all done, and it was on that basis plus the lab work that the stop shipment order was made.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member on a short supplementary question.

POSSIBLE ERROR IN JUDGMENT—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, I have a very short question for the same Minister. Would the Minister not agree that to any impartial observer of what happened in the last week it would appear that there has been an error in judgment? Would the Minister not also agree that, while most reasonable people are quite prepared to forgive an error in judgment, it is quite something else to have a Minister defending the indefensible, that is, to defend that error rather than admit it?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I have already said to the gentleman and to his Leader, yesterday and today, that if we can improve procedures obviously that is going to be done. That is being done, but again I come back to him and say this: let us also not throw out procedures which have worked very well for the protection of health of Canadians and, if we can improve on

that, we will do that, but let's keep that balance in mind as well.

Interparliamentary Delegation Report

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

TRADE

TABLING OF CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 67(2), I have the honour of tabling, in both official languages, the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement as initialed by Ambassador Simon Reisman, who is with us today, and Ambassador Peter Murphy.

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PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 106(8), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Government's response to Petitions Nos. 332-3279, 332-3293, 332-3294, 332-3326, 332-3327 and 332-3367 to 332-3370, inclusive.

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[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

TABLING OF REPORT OF CANADIAN DELEGATION AT CONFERENCE ON DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 101, I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Canadian Group of the Interparliamentary Union, the report of the official parliamentary delegation which represented Canada at the Interparliamentary Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in the Western Hemisphere in Caracas, Venezuela, from November 9 to 13, 1987.

In view of the importance of this topic and the role played by the Canadian delegation at this international conference, I wish to speak briefly to the report if I may.

First I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the other delegates to this conference—the Hon. Member for Windsor—Walkerville (Mr. McCurdy), Senator Lorne Bonnell, and Paul Rosenbaum of the Library of Parliament, adviser to the delegation.