

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the statute of CDC attempts to reconcile two prime objectives: one is profitability, and the other is the public interest of Canada. I think that with its investment in the Connaught Laboratories it is trying to reconcile the two.

Mr. Rynard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order regarding a starred question of mine which has been on the order paper since January 30. It is my understanding that starred questions put on the order paper should be answered within a period of a week. I may be wrong on this, and if I am, I stand to be corrected. No answer has been forthcoming to my question. Yesterday, and previously, I attempted to rise on several occasions on this point, but was not recognized. If I am wrong, I would like to be told about it because I should like to know whether it is the right of an hon. member, when he places a starred question on the order paper, to receive an answer, and within what period of time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North raises a point of order about the right of an hon. member to receive a reply to his starred question within a certain period of time. My understanding of the proceedings of the House in respect of starred questions is that a starred question entitles an hon. member to an oral answer when the answer is given, but does not give that member any right to demand an answer within a specified period of time.

Mr. Rynard: Since I first came to the House it has been the custom for a starred question to be answered within the period of a week. If I am wrong, I want to know it because then, I wonder what is the point of placing a starred question if it is left up to the minister to answer it if and when he likes. This is the very point that the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River raised.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North raises an interesting point, but again I have to say that I cannot find any authority which would entitle an hon. member to an answer to a starred question within a period of time. What it does entitle him to is an oral answer in the House when the answer is given.

Mr. Rynard: Mr. Speaker, my question then is, what is the point of placing a starred question on the order paper?

Some hon. Members: That is a good question.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: This exchange should not become an extended dialogue between the hon. member and the Chair. However, may I say that presumably the reason for placing a starred question on the order paper would be that it would result in an oral answer being given in the House, as opposed to a written answer.

Mr. Rynard: What Your Honour is saying then is that the minister can either give an answer or not give it. If that is what Your Honour is ruling, let us have it so that we know.

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is asking me for a ruling on a point of order. Let me make it clear. I have examined the precedents and authorities. I will put it in the terms of a specific ruling on the hon. member's point of order and tell him that I am not able to find any authority which can compel an answer to be given to any question, starred or otherwise, within any specific period of time. The adding of the asterisk requires an oral answer to the question.

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HEALTH

ALLEGED FAILURE OF PRODUCTS OF CONNAUGHT LABORATORIES TO MEET STANDARDS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, you recognized me on a supplementary question which I should like to direct to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the fact that in January of 1973 the Connaught Laboratories were found in breach of regulations covering raw materials, packaging and product stability, but nothing was done, and in February of 1974, Mr. Showalter, the chairman of the drug board, drew this to the attention of the chairman of Connaught Laboratories, Dr. R. J. Wilson, stating that there were violations in the finished products tests and quality control and that none of the other breaches had been corrected, and as governments were the big buyers of Connaught Laboratories products—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Rynard: I want to ask the minister if he is aware of the fact that Connaught Laboratories have been selling those inferior products and vaccines all this time, thus subjecting the public to risk and destroying their own good name?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, from January 17 to January 19, an inspection was held at the Connaught Laboratories and some deficiencies were detected in certain drugs. Steps were taken as a result of that inspection to correct the deficiencies and that was it.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

GOVERNMENT POLICY ON EXPORT OF ARMS TO TURKEY

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. On February 20 I asked him a question relating to the export from Canada of arms and military material to Turkey and whether licenses were being granted for this purpose. He replied that that used to be the situation, but that the situation had changed and the policy had been modified. He said he would like to refresh his memory in