

Inquiries of the Ministry

[English]

HEALTH AND WELFARE**STEPS TO PREVENT IMPORT OF U.S.
DIETETIC FOODS CONTAINING
CYCLAMATE**

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, the other day I directed a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce with respect to dietetic foods containing cyclamates which may perhaps flood the Canadian market as a result of the restrictions being placed on them in the United States. At that time the minister did not know whether this matter came within the purview of his department. Perhaps he has a statement to make today?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I believe most of it falls under the purview of the Department of National Health and Welfare and some aspects of it under the Department of National Revenue. I understand that the Minister of National Health and Welfare has already publicly said a number of things about the matter, and I wonder if he wants to say more about it at this time.

[Later:]

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to that asked by the hon. member for Hamilton West and is addressed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the fact that certain artificial sweeteners, the cyclamates, have been banned from Canadian use because of their possible relationship to cancer of the bladder in certain rats, can the minister give the House and the country his assurance that other artificial sweeteners have been sufficiently studied to ensure their safety to the Canadian public?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I believe I can give that assurance, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I wish to pose a supplementary question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Can he assure the country and the House that in the future, rather than depending on the leadership of American research to come to particular conclusions regarding hazardous foods, this government will take the lead in that regard?

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member is aware that about 80 per cent of the research in this whole area all over the world is conducted in the United States. As a result surely one would expect they are going to come up with findings of this nature more

[Mr. Speaker.]

than any other country, and certainly more than a country with a population of only 20 million. However, our people will be continuing their constant liaison with the United States researchers and will react to and assess their findings as quickly as possible. Of course in the meantime we are doing research ourselves. In comparison with countries of a similar size we have come up with many more findings in regard to unsafe products, and undoubtedly we will continue to do so in the future.

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE**REVISION OF DAIRY POLICY**

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, to follow up the question the hon. member for Lotbinière put to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, could the latter tell us whether, as a result of the constant reviewing by the government of its dairy policy, changes have been made and, if so, what were those changes and was the manufactured milk producers union told about them?

Mr. Florian Côté (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, when the hon. member for Lotbinière asked me that question, I think he wanted to know mostly if there was some co-operation between the government and the producers association. It so happens that, yesterday I met spokesmen from the manufactured milk producers association of the province of Quebec. I asked them if they were satisfied with the close contact they kept with the Canadian Dairy Commission and they replied that they were kept well informed by the Commission.

Mr. André Fortin (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question.

I do not quite understand the Parliamentary Secretary's reply as it seems to contradict his own statement—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the hon. member could ask his supplementary question.

Mr. Fortin: Could the Parliamentary Secretary inquire from the Canadian Dairy Commission and its officials who have, according to him, regular meetings with the representatives of the Quebec Dairy Producers Union, how many meetings were held, what changes were made and whether the people concerned were informed?

Mr. Côté (Richelieu): Yes, Mr. Speaker.