

Oral Questions

States, which decisions are now based mainly on continental rather than national considerations?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for notice. I do not think that the automobile industry has changed significantly in terms of the decision-making centres since the auto pact.

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• (1450)

AGRICULTURE

POSSIBILITY OF U.S. CATTLE GIVEN
DIETHYLSTILBESTROL ENTERING CANADA DESPITE
CANADIAN SUSPENSION OF USE OF DRUG

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Minister of Agriculture with regard to the use of diethylstilbestrol or DES as it is commonly known in the cattle feeding industry. Is the minister aware that after May 1 it will be possible for United States fed cattle that have been quite properly finished with DES implants to enter Canada for slaughter in spite of the Canadian suspension of the use of DES implants? If so, what is his department prepared to do about this situation?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am aware that research is being carried on in the United States and we have some of our officials in the United States observing this research to learn their findings. I am not aware that the report is finalized. Until that report is finalized and brought to my attention, I am not in a position to make a decision.

Mr. Hargrave: Is the minister aware of the unfair advantage United States cattle feeders will have over Canadian feeders because of our loss of the use of DES and a resulting feeding efficiency loss of some 10 to 15 per cent as a result of this imbalance in Canada-United States DES regulations on this product? If so, what will he do about it?

Mr. Whelan: As I said, Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the study that is being carried on. I am hoping this report will come forward early in February. At least, this is what I have been told. I am also aware of the disadvantage our producers will be under if American producers are allowed to use the product DES, as it is commonly referred to, in the United States. I am willing to go as far as discussing the matter with my counterpart in the United States. I have also discussed it with the Minister of National Health and Welfare for Canada to find out where we will go from there if the use of DES is still allowed in the United States.

[Later:]

INVESTIGATION OF ANTIBIOTICS ADDED TO CATTLE
FEED

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. It is supplementary to that asked by the hon. member for Medicine Hat. Is the

[Mr. O'Connor.]

minister prepared to take any action with regard to antibiotics routinely added to cattle feed as there is a good deal of evidence to indicate these may be more harmful to humans in some ways than diethylstilbestrol?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have been told by my department and the Department of National Health and Welfare that this is under constant study. Before any decisions are made, we want to make sure that we will be able to make the right decisions.

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FISHERIES

CONSTRUCTION ON WEST COAST OF VESSELS FOR
SERVICE IN THAT AREA

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries. During his speech on January 11 the minister promised the addition of three large ships and 12 medium-sized patrol craft to the fisheries and marine services. Can he now assure the House that at least the vessels for use on the west coast will be built on the west coast?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give that assurance. We always try to get these ships at the lowest possible cost. Nevertheless, it has been the habit of the government to buy in the area where the vessels are used.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY

CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES BEFORE AMENDING
OLD AGE SECURITY ACT

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Does he intend to follow up the wishes expressed by the Quebec Minister of Social Affairs concerning the necessity to hold a federal-provincial conference before amending the Old Age Pensions Act?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, in this connection I received a letter from the Quebec Minister of Social Affairs. As a matter of fact, I am going to meet him as well as my provincial counterparts within the next few days on the occasion of a federal-provincial conference of health ministers. Following these consultations, we will take advisement on what steps to take next.