

becoming the Prime Minister. I think that the Prime Minister owes the people of Canada an explanation.

An Hon. Member: Only the rat pack is applauding.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend missed a sentence that I read which stated that Mr. Mulroney became "a director of these companies at my request and relinquished his directorships when he became Leader of the Opposition in June 1983."

I also had to resign from the Canadian Red Cross, la Fondation Robert Cliche, the John Diefenbaker Foundation, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the National Ballet of Canada, and the Ottawa Civil Service Recreational Association.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Go back to Ontario. Peterson needs you.

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HEALTH

HAULAGE OF BEEF OVER TRANS-CANADA HIGHWAY

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Last Tuesday the Minister received a report informing him that an Alberta truck driver had hauled a load of beef through northern Ontario over the PCB route to Asbestos, Quebec, dropping off carcasses in Sudbury and Brockville, and depositing the remainder of his load for distribution in Quebec. By now many consumers will have purchased and perhaps eaten some of this beef.

Since people in these communities will be very anxious about the potential health risks from the exposure to PCBs, will the Minister undertake a full national inquiry into this matter and report to the House so that people can be assured that every precaution is being taken to deal with this incident and to prevent similar incidents in the future?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the points which the Hon. Member makes are essentially correct. It is true that hanging meat from Brooks, Alberta, was transported to Asbestos, Quebec. We became aware of that on Tuesday night. Yesterday investigations were launched, both at the two locations in Ontario and primarily in Asbestos, Quebec, including the wholesaler who is handling the meat. As of today—and I am not trying to compromise the Hon. Member in any way, but I have given her some private information as well—we have been able to look at six samples, six sides, or six carcasses out of the 57 that were in the truck. Of those most of them—that is the outside fat content—seem to be negative on PCBs, but there are two samples that have been found to be positive. The levels are very low. Despite that, all the technological information that I have received indicates

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there would not be a health risk. Despite that, we have indicated—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think this answer is getting a little long. The Minister may have a statement on motions to make? A supplementary question for the Hon. Member for Vancouver East.

REQUEST THAT NATIONAL SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM BE ESTABLISHED

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I asked the Minister whether he would conduct an immediate national inquiry which should involve both his Department and the Department of the Environment. I know he is very concerned about this, but the people involved are even more concerned. We want more than just assurance that there have been six samples tested.

Is it true that in his Department at the present time there is no national surveillance program available to determine health risk factors from environmental situations such as this? If it is true, will he immediately institute such a surveillance program which will conduct long-term research and will also involve people who may not even be aware that they were subjected to exposure?

● (1440)

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I was not trying to abuse the time of the House. I was trying to give information to ensure that panic, which can so easily be raised in these kinds of questions, does not in fact happen. That was my point.

I say to the Hon. Member that the Department is capable of handling the issue. We have looked at whatever carcasses we could. We have said—and I was going to give this information to her and to the House—that anyone who is concerned because of quantities, especially those with sides of beef in their freezers, can get in touch with the Sherbrooke office of HPB. I want to say to her—and I have also spoken to the Hon. Member from Asbestos—that we are willing to give whatever service we can, but I do not intend, because of the low levels, to create any fear or panic where it does not exist.

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AGRICULTURE

IRISH BEEF IMPORTS

Mr. A. H. Harry Brightwell (Perth): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. During the last week I have spoken with many beef farmers in my area about a possible increase in the quota for Irish beef and the detrimental effect of such a decision. They fear the decimation of the beef industry, the bankruptcy of many farmers, a loss of over a hundred jobs for every million pounds of imports, and disruption of our traditional export markets. Could the Minis-