

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Bouchard (Roberval):** Could you listen when I have to deal with a serious issue to Canadians, please.

**An hon. member:** It's a long time coming.

**Mr. Speaker:** Just a moment. This is the lead question of the hon. member on behalf of the Loyal Opposition. The minister is responding. It is an important question or it would not be the lead question. I ask hon. members to allow the minister to respond.

**Mr. Bouchard (Roberval):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "The independent advisory committee on breast implants, chaired by Dr. Cornelia Baynes, which was established on February 17, 1992, will help us in making information available. Dow Corning's decision does not change the need for the critical information."

There are three categories of women that we have to serve. The first group is those who have had the breast implant and do not have any problems. If there is any problem, they should be referred to their doctors. Those who have problems with the breast implant should also go to their doctors and make a good decision in light of the information that they can share. The third one is the future of the breast implant. We have a moratorium. I said it will not be back on the market unless I have the assurance there is no problem. I believe my predecessor and I dealt with that issue the best we could. We are trying to do one thing and that is to help Canadian women to make the best decisions.

• (1420)

**Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean):** To the same minister, Mr. Speaker. After years of repeated requests, the minister finally tabled some documents in the House two days ago. I find it very odd that excluded from the package were four key studies I had already obtained under Access to Information from his own department. I find this is bordering on deception. This is totally unacceptable to me and the members on this side of the House.

Will the minister re-examine the situation carefully and table the full and comprehensive set of documents before the end of this week?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, what I said two days ago, and I repeat today, is that all documentation available in the Department of National Health and Welfare which is

not protected as private information is available and will be available. If there are any documents that my colleague has that were not in the package, it could be that because those documents were already public they were not presented in the package.

I will repeat what I said. If there is any information available in the department which is not protected and I can make it available, I will. As I said, nothing has to be hidden and I never hide any information from Canadians.

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, I can understand why the minister is embarrassed about this issue because it is a classic example of a government that has not protected the health of women and continues to put the health of women at risk.

Today in the United States, Dow Corning announced a plan of a \$10 million fund to be set up to help the women of the United States, but said in its statement that there would not be a penny for the women of Canada. I ask the minister what specific action he intends to take today to go to the limit to sue Dow Corning to ensure that Canadian women are protected in this very important issue?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** As usual, Mr. Speaker, the member for Hamilton East is wrong. Dow Corning in Canada said it will respect the commitment it made in terms of research.

Second, the member should know that any surgery or any operation requested by doctors would be covered by the Canadian Health Act. She knows that, but she wants to play politics.

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Why, Mr. Speaker, should the Canadian health care system pay for a mistake by Dow Corning that was kept covered up for 20 years?

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, further to the minister's meeting in February with the group called "I Know", he promised that he was ready to go as far as suing Dow Corning. I therefore ask the minister whether he is prepared to demand for Canadian women the same rights that were announced today for American women. Why a double standard for Canadian women?