

Oral Questions

matter, which gave me a chance to discuss it with the Minister of Agriculture.

It appears that the Hon. Member is making a suggestion for change of Departments at the federal level. Of course I am prepared to consider the Hon. Member's suggestion and to examine it. But I would point out to him that the recommendations of the jury, some ten of them, were essentially addressed to the provincial Government. Whether it is Agriculture or Health that regulates and authorizes the existence of a pesticide, it remains up to the Province to train and license the users of that product. Therefore in this case I do not see that a change at the federal Government level would improve the licensing or training by the provincial Government, and it seems to me that that is where the problem should be first addressed.

• (1450)

Mr. Rose: Perhaps my supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture might be more convincing to the Prime Minister.

UNITED STATES TESTING OF CHEMICALS—REQUEST THAT
PESTICIDE REGISTRATION BE SUSPENDED

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, British Columbia farm workers are being hit by a double-whammy. On the one hand they will have more difficulty obtaining unemployment insurance at the federal level and, on the other hand, the Sacred Government at the provincial level will take away their right to workers' compensation safety standards—they will be exempted if they work on farms.

My question concerns the registration of pesticides, many of which are lethal. Based upon test data from Industrial Bio-Test Laboratories in the United States—and this company has been charged with criminal fraud for tampering with the results and for falsifying test results—43 of these chemicals are being used in Canada without any retesting. Monitor, one of the pesticides which caused this death, is on the list of 43 chemicals. Will the Minister of Agriculture change his mind and agree to suspend registration of these 43 chemicals until retesting in Canada is completed? That is what the coroner's jury wanted, and that is what the coroner's jury requested.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member knows, as I do, that some of the representatives of the British Columbia workers are in Ottawa today and that I am meeting with them after Question Period. We will discuss this and we will explain our position in detail to them. To the Hon. Member, I say there is no country in the world which has as strict a use of pesticides as we do. For instance, some of his constituents from British Columbia shop in the United States. Its rules and laws are much more lenient than ours.

As far as the use of the pesticide in fields, et cetera, is concerned, that is under provincial labour laws. We have arrangements with some Provinces where they have passed very strict laws on how to use any kind of pesticide where any

human will come in contact with it, as a matter of fact where animals may come in contact with it, especially after it is sprayed on fields, crops, and this type of thing.

We are concerned, but I would challenge the Hon. Member or anyone else to find a more strict regulatory program than we have in Canada. He knows full well that we are retesting and that we have spent several million dollars buying our own equipment to retest all chemicals which are brought into Canada and were tested by this company. In way over half of them, the tests are proving accurate. Many are starting that IBT tests were all fraudulent. Over half the tests are proving to be very accurate. It takes some time.

Some Hon. Members: Sit down!

Mr. Whelan: This chemical about which he is talking—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

GOVERNMENT EFFORT TO HELP FARMERS—INQUIRY WHETHER
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Madam Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister is aware that last week, the House agreed to refer to committee a proposal to help farmers who are being threatened with bankruptcy. In the circumstances, has the Minister asked his department and his officials to advise financial institutions that the Government will be making a special effort to assist farmers who are having trouble with their bank payments, and to enable banks to be a little more generous and a little less pressing with respect to payments to be met by farmers?

[*English*]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I am sure the Hon. Member is aware that thousands of farmers have been helped, not only by the Government but by lending institutions also. I am sure he is aware as well that some people in rural Canada need special attention. We have also helped people in positions which are not the kind they desire to be in, namely, the economic conditions in which they find themselves. Certain production entities, mostly confined to the red meat industry, whether pork producers or beef producers, are the ones in the greatest financial difficulty. We are doing everything humanly possible to assist them.

But I am sure the Hon. Member agrees with me that we cannot just finance them out of the difficulty they are in. Some of them need better marketing conditions, better returns for their commodities. Because the commodities they are producing have shown a decreased level of income for them, they are wanting some kind of stabilization. Most of the countries with