

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 4, 1988

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayers*

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### STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[*Translation*]

#### HEALTH

##### DEATHS AND POISONINGS CAUSED BY DRUGS AND FOOD

**Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont):** Mr. Speaker, during the past weeks, there have been reports in the media on deaths caused by the freon contained in food products packaged in aerosol containers, and also about babies born with congenital defects attributed to Accutane and anti-psoriasis drugs, prescribed by dermatologists and general practitioners.

Mr. Speaker, Canadians are concerned. Their fears are justified because they wonder whether they should trust their doctors when they prescribe their medication, and they also wonder whether they should trust their supermarkets to sell them food that is safe to eat, and they wonder whether they should trust the Government that is supposed to protect them with its legislation and thus prevent food poisoning or serious illnesses as a result of ingesting medication or food products.

Mr. Speaker, how long will Canadians have to wait for the Government to react with stricter directives on food and drugs? Do we need a higher rate of birth defects before the Government decides to react?

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● (1405)

[*English*]

#### HEALTH

##### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS—VOLUNTEERS' WORK TO ASSIST RESEARCH

**Mr. Albert Girard (Restigouche):** Mr. Speaker, this week thousands of Canadians are banding together to fight multiple sclerosis, a potentially crippling disease of the central nervous system. At least 50,000 Canadians have MS, a disease which, as yet, has no known cause, no cure, and no effective treatment.

Some have called MS "Canada's disease" since our prevalence rate is among the highest in the world. Recognizing this, Canadians, through the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, are working to conquer MS. All across the country this month volunteers are joining forces to raise \$2.3 million for MS research and services for those who have MS.

MS research is making progress and Canadian researchers are among the world leaders. Researchers at the University of British Columbia, under the direction of Dr. Donald Paty, are pace-setters in using a device called MRI to diagnose and follow the progress of MS. In Toronto, Drs. Roder and Dunn have cloned the gene for a substance that may be extremely important in understanding how the nervous system works.

The contributions that Canadians make during this month-long campaign will be vital to continuing this very necessary research. I urge the Government and all Canadians to support the MS carnation campaign generously.

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#### CHEMICAL WEAPONS

##### UNITED STATES' PRODUCTION OF BINARY AGENTS

**Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, the use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq conflict has once again focused world attention on the horrific consequences of their use. Canadians will not soon forget the terrible images of men, women, and children lying dead, of mothers and fathers huddled over the frozen bodies of their children, all victims of a silent and unseen weapon.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) recognized the true nature of these weapons when he told this House last Friday, "There are hideous weapons in the chemical weapons field on which we are trying to make progress". In light of the Minister's remarks I urge the Government to reconsider its misguided and unqualified support of the United States' production of a new regime of chemical weapons, namely, binary agents.

Real progress toward an international convention banning chemical weapons will be encouraged if the Government of Canada now takes a strong stand against these new agents of death.