

## Oral Questions

● (1420)

[Translation]

## HEALTH

## SUGGESTED UNIFORMITY OF MEAT INSPECTION STAMPS

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare a question which is complementary to those asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

Has the minister had any meeting with his provincial counterparts or does he intend to have any in order to assure that the standards indicated by the stamps "Canada approved" or "Quebec approved" or "Ontario approved" be the same as regards the quality of meat sold for human consumption?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, standards and norms have been well recognized as far as Canada is concerned. As for the stamps affixed by the provinces, they are supposed to conform roughly to Canadian standards. The problem presently occurring in Quebec seems obviously related to the enforcement of the provincial regulations which does not seem to have been adequate.

**Mr. Beaudoin:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question. The minister just said that these standards are similar. Could he advise the House whether he will advocate, with his provincial counterparts, the same standards relating to the hygiene of slaughterhouses, to the transportation of livestock to slaughterhouses, in order that the standards be the same for federal and provincial governments?

**Mr. Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I am not ready to give the hon. member that assurance as regards the details of the regulations in the various provinces, which are different from the regulations enforced at the federal level. But nevertheless I want to point out to him that the present problem is not related to the regulations per se but to their enforcement which does not seem to have been adequate. As for the basic problem raised by the hon. member, it is of public interest and I will examine it more thoroughly.

[English]

REASON FOR FAILURE TO PROSECUTE QUEBEC MERCHANTS  
SELLING MEAT UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the minister. In his reply to the Leader of the Opposition the minister stated that the inquiry which has been launched by the government of Quebec was as a result of inspection carried out by his department under the Food and Drugs Act. If that is the case, perhaps the minister will explain to the House why he did not discharge his responsibility under the act and lay prosecutions under section 4 of the act.

[Translation]

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** As usual, the hon. member is apparently giving my reply a somewhat larger interpretation than what I

[Mr. Buchanan.]

actually said. I said that the investigation had been initiated following inquiries made by my departmental inspectors. From the very beginning of the investigation, however, it was ascertained that this was the sort of work which could be more properly carried out by police forces than by departmental officials, so that, right from the start, the proper police forces were invited to take charge of and carry out the investigation; and now their findings are about to be made public. The necessary legal proceedings will be instituted after all the necessary evidence has been gathered by this investigation.

[English]

REASON DISEASED MEAT SOLD IN QUEBEC IN LIGHT OF  
INCREASED NUMBER OF INSPECTORS

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** In June of last year the Food Prices Review Board recommended additional inspection of meat in Canada to ensure that diseased and inferior meat is not being sold to the public, and again on October 25 of last year the minister in a statement in the House said that 30 additional technical and professional staff in the field will work exclusively on meat sampling across the country. If that has been done—and I assume these inspectors are still active—would the minister explain to the House how it is that 700,000 pounds of diseased meat can be sold to the public in the province of Quebec?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, obviously the excellent work that is being done by the inspectors has unveiled some quite inappropriate practices which come, I repeat, under the jurisdiction of the province concerned.

[English]

**Mr. McGrath:** That is no consolation to the people who ate that meat.

GOVERNMENT INTENTIONS WITH REGARD TO SETTING  
BACTERIA LEVELS IN MEAT

**Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare as well. In view of the fact that there have been some discussions with the provinces concerning the setting up of national standards for acceptable bacterial levels in meat, can the minister indicate whether it is still the intention of the federal government to set national standards for acceptable levels of bacteria in meat or whether the federal government is backing away from this concept?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, the answer to the last part of the question is no.

[English]

**Mr. Yewchuk:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry but my question was not one that could be answered yes or no. I asked the minister whether the government was backing away from