

*Oral Questions***HEALTH**REASON FOR FAILURE TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR  
ACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF ARSENIC IN THE AIR

**Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Considering that in a letter dated January 9, 1976 signed by Mr. J. R. Hickman, director of the bureau of chemical hazards in the minister's department, a copy of which I have before me, it is said that "it is now reasonably established that workers that have been exposed to arsenic over long periods of time because of their occupation have suffered increased mortality from cancer", and considering that this letter was sent by a department head within the minister's own department more than a year ago, would the minister explain how it is conceivable that up to this point nothing has yet been done to establish acceptable health standards as they pertain to arsenic levels in the air?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the New Democratic Party has a document I do not possess myself. I would be pleased to look at it and give an answer to the hon. member.

[*English*]

**Mr. Broadbent:** A supplementary question. While the minister is undertaking to investigate this document would he also consider the implications of another quote from the letter, in which Mr. Hickman says that "the purpose of this letter is to request you to initiate action under the provisions of the Clean Air Act". In order to remove this significant health hazard to workers, would he investigate that; and if, as seems to be obvious, appropriate action was not taken more than a year ago on this matter, will he take the appropriate disciplinary steps and also consider his important obligations in this area as a minister?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to listen to the admonitions of the leader of the New Democratic Party. As for the second quotation he referred to, he clearly indicated that my department has indeed asked that steps be taken; this seems to contradict the first quotation. Therefore I cannot see why he makes selective quotations such as these. It would have been simpler to send me the complete text of the letter. We could then exchange views more intelligently.

[*English*]

**Mr. Broadbent:** A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister has clearly misunderstood my second question but I shall take steps to see that he gets a copy of the letter immediately. My final supplementary question is for the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the absence of the minister who is responsible for bringing directly before the House or to cabinet regulations to enforce the Clean Air Act, would the Acting Prime Minister explain how it has been possible, given a memo dated February 6, 1975, which is almost two years ago, this time sent to a different minister in a different area of

[Mr. Roberts.]

responsibility but precisely on the same subject matter of clean air, that no action was taken regarding that recommendation which came from a second department of the government?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I have no ready answer to the question. Probably I could contrive one but I will be happy to look into the matter and see if indeed no action has been taken as alleged by the hon. member. I would be very doubtful that his suggestion is correct.

REPORT ON CONNAUGHT LABORATORIES—ACTION TO MAKE  
CANADA SELF-SUFFICIENT IN BIOLOGICALS

**Mr. Stanley Haidasz (Parkdale):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare whether he has had the opportunity of studying the CMA committee report on Connaught Laboratories and when he will take steps to make Canada self-sufficient in the manufacture of biologicals necessary for the health needs of the nation?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I have indeed received a copy of the report from the CMA which was made public a few weeks ago and I have asked my officials to examine it. I was very happy to see that this particular report proved that the allegations that had been made by various organizations and media people against Connaught were unfounded. At the same time, that particular report included some recommendations having to do with self-sufficiency in biologicals, and I have asked my officials to examine this matter. I expect a comment from my officials within the next few weeks. At that time I hope to be in a position to state what government policy will be in this respect.

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**TRADE**

## GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO STIMULATE EXPORTS

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. As Canada's share of world trade has recently slipped from 8 per cent to 6 per cent, and as we have a yearly deficit of \$10 billion in manufactured products, the ones that produce the jobs, I ask the minister whether the program which he announced last week of combining six existing programs, none of which has been effective in increasing our sales of manufactured products, is his only answer to increasing exports of these products? If not, when does he expect to announce a really effective program?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, first I wish to indicate that I reject the hon. member's suggestion that the deficit amounted to \$10 billion. I think it was lower than that and the hon. member forgot to mention that in 1976 we had a surplus of \$1.3 billion