

### Oral Questions

governments to work together more effectively to deal with the smuggling of firearms.

I fully agree with the hon. member, it is an important issue. It needs more attention, and it will get it.

**Mr. Myron Thompson (Wild Rose, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, if he agrees with me, he should have agreed with me 18 months ago and got off his backside and done something about it.

I will ask the justice minister one simple question. Since he is fully aware and has been made aware by a number of people that registration will do nothing to curb crime, why does he not scrap that whole idea and save the taxpayers a lot of dollars?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if I were to do such a thing I would disappoint the strongest supporters of registration, the chiefs of police of the country, the frontline police officers, the Canadian Police Association, the mayors of cities, the professional health care workers, people who know of the close, the practical, and the demonstrable connection between registration of firearms and achieving greater public safety.

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[Translation]

### SOMATOTROPIN

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

We learned in *La Presse* on the weekend that somatotropin has been entering Canada freely as customs officers are unauthorized to stop it. All the while, the Minister of Health is imagining that this hormone, which may pose a health hazard, is not being used because of a moratorium on it.

Would the minister tell us whether Health Canada is taking particular action against those who are importing somatotropin, because the use of it is banned?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member has information she could share with us on the sale of this product, which is not legal in Canada, we would appreciate it if she would tell us.

**Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would invite the minister to read this weekend's *La Presse*.

• (1435)

How can the Minister of Health think that the Minister of Agriculture's moratorium has any effect at all, when appreciable quantities of this hormone are entering Canada, and does she intend punishing those using this hormone despite the ban?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course, because it is not approved for sale in Canada. As regards the moratorium, the hon. member should perhaps talk to the Minister of Agriculture.

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[English]

### AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Transport suggested he might cancel the problematic air traffic control computerization contract with Hughes Aircraft. Now he has apparently offered the company more than a hundred million taxpayer dollars to supply a system inferior to that in the original contract.

How does the minister justify his about face, which will actually reward a company for not living up to its government contract?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the difficulties with Hughes on that contract are well known. As the hon. member has raised in the House and as I have agreed, we have to find a way out of that. It is a very difficult and complex question.

It is a very odd situation to have the hon. member now suggest that we should cancel the contract when has been such a stout defender of the Pearson contract.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister did not hesitate to cancel the Pearson airport contract without producing a single item of evidence of wrongdoing.

Hughes is a year and a half behind schedule. It has stated that it cannot provide what it contracted to provide the government with and it wants even more money for what it does supply.

If Hughes insists on more money for an inferior system, why does the minister not either approach an alternate bidder or simply retender the air traffic control contract altogether?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been millions of dollars spent already on this contract. I agree with the hon. member that the contract is not being delivered on schedule and that it is over budget.

We are negotiating with Hughes to try to find a solution to the problem. The hon. member would know that the contract was entered into a number of years ago. It came to my attention that there were problems with it and I immediately informed the auditor general of my concerns. I have discussed the matter with my deputy minister. We are going to try to find a solution to it.

The problem we face with Hughes I think the hon. member would recognize as a good reason why we should proceed