

Oral Questions

[Translation]

EXTERNAL AID

UTILIZATION OF SMALL PORTS

Mr. Albert Girard (Restigouche): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of External Relations.

Since the Canadian International Development Agency grants each year hundreds of million dollars in aid to Third World countries which then purchase goods and service from Canadian businesses, would the Minister specifically ask CIDA to change its policies and practices so that small sea ports such as Belledune, Saint John, Dalhousie, Rimouski, Churchill and Vancouver can be used to ship goods to developing countries as this would give an opportunity to small- and medium-sized businesses to bid for the supply of finished and semi-finished goods, as required under those assistance programs for Third World countries?

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for this very important question. I can tell the House that I have already asked my officials to report on the purchasing and transport practices for all projects financed by CIDA. I have also asked for a report on the pros and cons of regrouping at a single port the goods to be shipped, and I have asked that information be made available to all cities and municipalities so that the businesses you have just mentioned can take advantage of our programs. I am waiting for the results of this review and I shall be happy to keep you informed.

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[English]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

PESTICIDE STUDIES

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. The Minister knows, or should know, that pesticides seriously endanger the environment, particularly fish, waterfowl, the quality of water, and ultimately human health.

The Minister's announcement last November brought to a grinding halt a number of studies on the environment, on the effect of pesticides, particularly on the water environment and the elements I have mentioned. Is the Minister willing to restore the budget of the Canadian Wildlife Service so as to permit the continuation of these studies?

[Translation]

Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member is interested in the use of delta-metryl as a pesticide in agriculture, I can tell him that I have been informed by my officials that they approve the controlled use of this pesticide and have so advised their Department of Agriculture colleagues.

[English]

OFFICIALS' ADVICE

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Evidently, Mr. Speaker, the Minister does not realize that the views of her officials have been completely overruled. Therefore I will direct my supplementary question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I know that the Minister is very keen on the effectiveness of his Department in implementing its mandate.

Considering the fact that in recent months his officials have been overruled twice by the Minister of Agriculture, in the case of Alachlor and Delta Methrin, which are very powerful pesticides, what action does the Minister intend to take to prevent this from happening in the future?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I should tell the Hon. Member that it is not a matter of overruling. He will know, from his own experience when he had the responsibility, that there are discussions between the various Departments and Ministers. Those discussions are carried on between the Minister of Agriculture and myself. Obviously there is a concern at any time in regard to the use of pesticides, but that must also be balanced with cost benefits. I think he is aware of that as well.

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INDUSTRY

MITEL CORPORATION—BRITISH TELECOM TAKEOVER OPTION

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have another question about the British Telecom proposed takeover of Mitel. Is the Minister aware that, as an alternative to taking 51 per cent of the shares of Mitel, thereby taking control of the second largest telecommunications company in Canada, British Telecom has an unconditional option to take only 18.5 per cent of Mitel, which will leave control in Canada? In view of that option, which is clearly a fallback position for British Telecom, will the Minister not intervene to negotiate that British Telecom only takes that much of Mitel, so that control of this important company can stay in Canadian hands?

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, we have not received any formal notification, or certainly any application with respect to the FIRA process, concerning this transaction. I can only tell the Hon. Member that when we get the detail about the nature of the proposal, we will look at all of the alternatives and act in the best interest of Canada.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the 18.5 per cent option would give the benefit of a link-up with a major company in Britain, without the loss of Canadian ownership, will the Minister undertake that that will be the first option considered by the Government, rather than giving up control of Mitel to British Telecom? Then it