

Oral Questions

drug is the subject of a criminal investigation after two people died from it in the United States.

How can the Minister of Health justify her department's decision to authorize the use of ALG when this high-risk experimental drug was never approved and authorized for export by the United States since it was developed in the early 1970s?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, of course, I will have to find out about the case in question. I was not given details. If you want, I am prepared to give you all the necessary information which I might obtain. If you have information to give me, please let me have it.

The Speaker: Before giving the floor to the hon. member for Roberval, I would ask hon. members to always address the Chair.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, gladly, as I usually do anyway.

Mr. Speaker, through you, let me suggest that the minister listen to the CBC news where this case was reported today. At the same time, I would like to ask her if she could investigate the circumstances surrounding her department's decision to authorize the use of this dangerous drug in eleven Canadian hospitals. Does she admit that the present system for authorizing medication is very seriously deficient since Health Canada exercises no control over or follow-up on the effects of experimental drugs after authorizing them?

[English]

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would like the opportunity to look into the particular case since I have no information at this point.

Let me advise this House that the scientists and people in Health Canada are extremely concerned with any new experimental drug. I am sure they will do everything in their power to ensure the safety of any product that is distributed here in Canada.

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• (1425)

TRADE

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

As the minister knows Canada's trade ministers have been meeting to discuss ways and means of securing freer trade within Canada. Various trade associations have suggested there are over 500 barriers to trade, they cost us \$6 billion and, of course, they kill jobs.

Is the federal government considering more proactive measures, federal initiatives, to dismantle interprovincial trade barriers if the provincial ministers fail to do more than just scratch the surface?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think the comprehensive approach that has been taken by the minister responsible for industry who has been leading the federal discussion on these issues is indeed far more than scratching the surface. He is getting an excellent response from his provincial counterparts in areas ranging from environmental protection to breaking down a number of the other 500-plus barriers that prevent interprovincial free trade.

We have every expectation that at the end of June, the deadline that the minister has imposed for himself and his provincial colleagues, we will have another success story to speak of for the Liberal government.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, the track record of these discussions is that the trade ministers come up with a list of exemptions as long as your arm.

The Constitution empowers the federal government to regulate trade and commerce and provide some capacity for the federal government itself to act on internal barriers to trade. Section 121 of the Constitution states: "All articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of any one of the provinces shall, from and after the union, be admitted free into each of the other provinces".

My question for the Deputy Prime Minister is this: What is the federal government doing to exercise its current constitutional powers, including the application of section 121, to facilitate freer trade in Canada?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the member's question is a good example of why he had better go back to the constitutional drawing board.

This morning we heard the same member stand in the House and complain that the federal government was too directive in a number of areas. He wanted us to divest our responsibility to the provinces. This afternoon he is telling us that we are not doing enough.

In fact the Minister of Industry has a negotiated approach. He has brought all the parties to the table. He expects to have a full and comprehensive free trade agreement reached by the end of June.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I have one further supplementary question.

Internal barriers to trade are created by provincial governments and inflict injury on businesses and consumers. The federal government's approach to dealing with these barriers has been to get the provinces, the creators of the problem, together and ask them to solve it.

Has the government considered bringing together businesses and consumers that are injured by internal barriers to trade and giving them the tools to fight these barriers; for example