

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I can speak only for the plants being inspected under federal jurisdiction; all meat processed in those plants under federal jurisdiction has been properly inspected by federal officials. I am afraid that is the only answer I can give the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker: One final supplementary by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Stanfield: Is the minister suggesting that section 4 of the Food and Drugs Act which prohibits the sale of meat unfit for human consumption and section 22 which authorizes inspection by the minister's officials of any abattoir or any place where food is stored, are *ultra vires*?

Mr. Lalonde: The Leader of the Opposition is obviously asking me for a legal opinion.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Gus Mitges (Grey-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of what the minister said, and in view of the fact that federal inspectors have discovered that a second packing house is involved in the Quebec tainted meat scandal besides Federal Packing Incorporated of Magog, Quebec, can the minister say why no charges have been laid despite the fact that 700 pounds of tainted meat have been seized from this plant by inspectors?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): For a very simple reason, Mr. Speaker: a full investigation must have been carried out before legal proceedings can be instituted under the Criminal Code or the Food Act.

[English]

PROPOSED COMPULSORY FEDERAL INSPECTION OF MEAT

Mr. Gus Mitges (Grey-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that evidently there is no compulsory provincial meat inspection carried out by the province of Quebec and that as of 1973, 380 abattoirs in that province had no government inspection of any kind, thus exposing the public to the ravages of disease and infection from consumption of diseased and tainted meat, will the Prime Minister now give serious consideration and undertake the necessary steps to make meat inspection compulsory throughout Canada and under the direct supervision of the health of animals branch of the Department of Agriculture? As a former employee, I have the highest regard for them and am sure they will do the job correctly without any problems whatsoever.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I will take that as a representation and will look at it.

Oral Questions

INDIAN AFFAIRS

SUGGESTED WITHDRAWAL OF CIRCULARS CONTAINING
GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNTIL NATIVE
LEADERS CONSULTED

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development concerning the recently implemented policy guideline circulars in Saskatchewan. In view of the fact that the concept of these circulars has been rejected by all elected Indian leaders, and in view of the fact that these circulars are in effect continuing the policy outlined in the 1969 white paper which was rejected by the government, is the minister prepared to rescind the use of these circulars until there has been some meaningful consultation and involvement with Indian leaders?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated yesterday in reply to another hon. member, there has been consultation on this matter. We feel that the guidelines respond in many ways to the requests of the native people who said they wanted to know what the rules were under which they have to deal with the program funding coming from this department. This is a specific request that has come to us from many bands, not provincial associations but bands across the country, and one to which we have endeavoured to respond. I have indicated that the guidelines have been regarded as being of an interim nature, and we will be prepared to re-examine them before the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Firth: Mr. Speaker, the minister said last year that he would only deal with elected representatives of the Indian people. Why is he now creating another bureaucratic level of the district and local governments which will compete with the elected Indian leaders?

Mr. Buchanan: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I do not understand the intent of that statement. This is to be dealt with by the chiefs and the bands; and they are the ones who have the responsibility.

REFUSAL OF SASKATCHEWAN CHIEFS TO WORK WITH
REGIONAL DIRECTOR JIM WRIGHT—REQUEST FOR
REPLACEMENT

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): In view of the fact that 69 out of 69 Indian chiefs in Saskatchewan have indicated they are unwilling to work with the department's acting regional director, Jim Wright, would the minister consider replacing him with some one more acceptable to the Indian leaders in Saskatchewan?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wright, as was indicated by the hon. member, is on an acting basis. We made it clear that when a permanent appointment is made, which we expect to be this summer, the Indian people will sit on the selection board, as is the normal practice.