

Oral Questions

ed to the department his personal preference for either the national emergency alarm repeater, a warning system attached to any electrical outlet, or the crisis home alert technique, a system operating through radio or television sets?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lamontagne: Madam Speaker, one thing has to be recognized: the questions I am now asked are excessively technical. I do not think the Minister of National Defence should be expected to give explicit answers to every question of this type. But if hon. members want answers—

An hon. Member: Answers is not what they are after!

[*English*]

Mr. Clark: Trudeau needs Falls.

Mr. Lamontagne: Do you want an answer, or not?

Mr. Clark: Yes.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Go ahead, give us an answer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lamontagne: Madam Speaker, if they want real, complete and evolved answers to their questions, I do not think the question period is the only forum. I can supply them in other ways, either in written form or otherwise.

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● (1450)

[*English*]

HEALTH AND WELFARE

REQUEST SLIDESHOW "ALICE IN ADDITIVE LAND" BE TAKEN OUT OF CIRCULATION

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Recently, the educational services section of the health protection branch began distributing to the public a slideshow called "Alice in Additive Land". In my view, this show is sexist in nature and tends to have a very uncritical attitude toward the whole food additive industry.

I gave the minister notice that I intended to raise this matter in the House two weeks ago, so that she would have an opportunity to view the slideshow herself. I ask the minister now whether or not she has had a chance to view the slideshow called "Alice in Additive Land", and whether or not she is prepared to pull it out of circulation and have it redone so that it is a much more balanced presentation than it is at present.

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I saw the show the evening of the day the hon. member gave me notice. I thank the hon. member for having mentioned this particular slideshow to me. I did not

find it sexist at all, nor did I find it biased toward the industry. On the other hand, it is not a show that will win an Oscar.

This slideshow was done, as I understand it, just before I came back to the department. It was ready for distribution in March. It is obvious that it was done with very little money: the style of cartoon is around the 1955 era of the film industry.

Other than that criticism of the style of delivery of the show, I did not detect—and I read the script twice—any other criticisms. I have asked my officials to review it once more with regard to possible industry bias. However, I saw no such bias. That is all I can tell the House at this point.

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, the slideshow is not the only act which is not deserving of an Oscar.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blaikie: I find it very difficult to believe that the Minister of National Health and Welfare—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I think we need a little more silence in the House today: it is very hard for me to follow what is going on.

Mr. Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I find it difficult to believe that the Minister of National Health and Welfare does not find that slideshow insulting to women. Can the minister tell the House when the Department of Health and Welfare became a public relations agency for the food additive industry?

[*Translation*]

Miss Bégin: Madam Speaker, I am going to answer in French as it is obvious that my message did not get through. I thought I had explained to the hon. member that the two allegations he made against me, first, that the slideshow is sexist and, second, that it gave a biased image in favour of industry, were completely wrong. If he has any evidence whatsoever of sexism, well, my God, let him educate me because I fail to grasp it.

As concerns the only problem which I consider to have any gravity—

[*English*]

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss Bégin: Now I must check the translation.

[*Translation*]

As concerns the only problem which might be serious, even if it did not appear as such to me, that of a possible distortion in favour of industry, I do not believe that it is true. I would point out to the hon. member that we made a survey on food additives among Canadians. When I made that study public, Canadians showed that they were very concerned about food additives and yet they did not know exactly what they were. The role of my department is certainly to inform the public and I