

*Oral Questions***BREAST IMPLANTS**

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the member is not aware that three weeks ago, I believe, within the green plan I made an announcement that we will spend \$170 million to deal with the problem of environment and health. We particularly said that we would target particular groups. It just so happens that two of the groups we are targeting are women and children.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

The huge amount of money is extremely interesting, but we have a report with some very specific recommendations. The Minister of the Environment is admitting that his regulations for effluents into the Great Lakes still allow 400,000 tonnes a year of toxic substances to flow into our lakes and rivers.

The IJC says that any quantity of toxic substances is too dangerous to human health. They say zero discharge means zero.

Will the government now listen to this urgent advice? Will it act immediately at least to admit that it made a mistake last December and that it must ban all effluents of organo-chlorines into our waters?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, certainly I will not admit that the Minister of the Environment made a mistake last December.

I will repeat what I said before to the member's colleague and to her. The question is not just to announce money. The government has done a lot when dealing with the question of health and the environment, obviously much more than you did before, but that is not the problem. We do progressively what should be done in terms of health.

The member will admit that we have many different reports on the relationship between the environment and health. The experts in all departments, in all committees and all reports are not unanimous all the time, but we are trying to deal with all reports in a way that will continue, because we do well, to protect the health of Canadians.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare as well.

Yesterday the minister released the Baines report on breast implants. The report complained of a shortage of data on everything from the constituents of silicone implants to how long the devices can be expected to last in the body. The report is an indictment of the health ministry that after 30 years on the market and years of sustained questioning about safety, and after government studies upon studies, the ministry has failed to ensure that scientific research was done to protect women.

In all of last week's announcements, the minister has failed to provide one word that women with implants would know where to go and who to see for help. When will the minister provide that information?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, there are so many errors in what my friend said that I will not have enough time to answer that question.

First of all, she should know that Dr. Baines said that there was no evidence that the silicone gel breast implant does not create problems, and she also said that there is no evidence that they create problems.

Second, when the member said that women have nowhere to go she is wrong. She has not read the report correctly. The doctor proposed, and I accepted the proposal, that we should first of all look at a registry for all women with breast implants.

• (1440)

Second, we said we will consider a survey by Angus Reid of women who have had breast implants to give not only their impressions but their experiences. We have decided to study this for the next six months before making a decision.

We will have more studies such as those she asked for. We will have more data and that will permit us to determine whether to lift the ban on breast implants. In the meantime, we have decided to protect Canadian women.

There are no silicone gel implants on the market today when they are available in the United States.