

Oral Questions

unit where it does not fit in one area while taking another unilingual unit away from where it fits beautifully?

An hon. Member: Pourquoi?

Hon. Barney Danson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman is asking for logic in some of these situations.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Paproski: Just answer the question.

Mr. Hees: You never heard of logic.

Mr. Danson: What my hon. friend does not appreciate is the fact that there is a military decision to be made and it has to be taken in concert with the bilingual policy of the government. Military decisions are not made to accommodate the bilingual policy but rather it is the bilingual policy which has to accommodate military tasks. What we are doing here is to enhance the armed forces as was announced, as most military people appreciate and understand. If the hon. gentleman would care to come to my office, I will draw some pictures for him to explain the situation.

* * *

AGRICULTURE**REASON FOR FAILURE TO TEST SOME CATTLE IMPORTED FROM MICHIGAN FOR PBB**

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the logical Minister of Agriculture.

An hon. Member: Are you kidding?

Mr. Nystrom: In view of the fact that over 70,000 cattle have been imported into Canada in the last two years from Michigan where an environmental accident occurred in 1973 and poisoned large numbers of livestock with a chemical called PBB, I should like to ask the minister whether or not he can explain to the House why only about 700 cattle were tested for this chemical, especially since the government knew it occurred since 1974 and especially since there is a vast surplus of cattle in this country?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member is aware that you do not test every animal that is slaughtered. You take spot checks on cattle. Many of the cattle that are fed in Michigan are not raised in Michigan. They are put in feedlots, fed in Michigan and then shipped into Ontario. We are concerned about this. We have done the tests, as I am sure the hon. member is aware because my officials have told me they have given him in fact the same information they have given me. It may be necessary to continue with further testing of the fatty tissues in the meat to trace this chemical, but our officials feel sure that they have done everything humanly possible to ensure that these tests are accurate. The last group of cattle in which it has been found

[Mr. Paproski.]

have been held in detention until further tests, and I understand that those tests have been taken yesterday in Ottawa and I do not know what the results of them are.

● (1450)

Mr. Nystrom: In view of the fact that the substance went into the feed and most of the cattle in Michigan ate it and that medical studies just a few weeks ago revealed that out of the 1,000 people tested in Michigan nearly a third had suffered adverse health effects, possibly because of having eaten meat contaminated by PBB, I would like to ask, in order to protect the Canadian people in the future, whether the minister is willing to designate a group of officials in his department to monitor any environmental incidents which might affect the food system. This particular problem was known about three years ago and nothing was done.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member himself recognizes that that feed was manufactured three years ago. Surely to goodness he does not think that feed which was manufactured three years ago is still being used. There is now a different feeding program, and those cattle are no longer in existence. They were destroyed by the Michigan and the Agriculture health authorities in the United States of America. Any evidence that they had of cattle consuming that feed at that time was destroyed.

BEEF CATTLE—INQUIRY AS TO POSSIBILITY OF DEFICIENCY PAYMENT

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. Is there going to be a deficiency payment made this year to beef producers under the beef support program for cattle marketed in 1976, and if so, when will the minister make the announcement?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, there is a program. The decision was made some time ago, and I believe the announcement has been made already today that the price would be \$40.16 per hundredweight, and it would be made on a quarterly basis.

Mr. John Wise (Elgin): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, but I see he has momentarily left the chamber.

* * *

[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY**REQUEST FOR COMPENSATION FOR LOSSES SUSTAINED BY PENSIONERS IN DISASTERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Jacques Lavoie (Hochelaga): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

In view of the fact that a welfare recipient is entitled to some money to compensate for the loss of his property as a