

earlier by the hon. member for South Shore to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. I wish to direct my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the fact the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and Japan, just to name a few of the many nations that recognize Communist China but continue to have satisfactory trading arrangements with the free enterprise government of the Republic of China, can the minister indicate if he will take steps to see if a similar type of arrangement can be made with the government in Taiwan which would be of material assistance in overcoming the unfavourable trade balance Canada presently has with that country in the limited trade presently carried out?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we do have trade, as the hon. member pointed out in his question, with business interests within Taiwan. I do understand that there have been trading institutions; at least it is said that countries like the United Kingdom have maintained trading houses in Taiwan without jeopardizing their one-China policy. This is a matter which I have discussed privately with members of the House. I have taken into account some views which have been expressed by them and I hope to meet them at a later time with some results.

* * *

● (1150)

[Translation]

HEALTH

DEATH OF CHILDREN ATTRIBUTED TO SPRUCE BUDWORM SPRAY—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PREVENT

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is serious. I put it to the Minister of the Environment although it probably also concerns the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

As it now seems to have been established by a team of researchers at Dalhousie University in Halifax and also American researchers in the U.S. that four children died as a result of the presence in 1973 of certain solvents in the insecticides used against the spruce budworm in Nova Scotia, and as those solvents may possibly be used again this year, can the Minister of the Environment and possibly the Minister of National Health and Welfare assure this House that very strict controls will apply to avoid a possible recurrence of that tragedy this year as it is expected that the spraying program will be very intensive this year of eastern Canada's forests?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Nova Scotia government cancelled a project involving the spraying of the province's forests with certain solvents.

I believe the New Brunswick legislative assembly may set up a committee to study the situation and examine the whole forest spraying program in that province.

Still, I should like to clarify one of the statements of the hon. member in his opening remarks. The Medical Research Council and my department have financed the studies of a group of scientists located at Halifax in Nova

Oral Questions

Scotia. Those studies are still underway but at this point in time they do not allow us to conclude definitely that the insecticides used are linked with the fatal diseases found in some children. It is clear that further studies and research will have to be pursued in that field. It seems too early to conclude that the insecticides caused the diseases that were diagnosed.

* * *

[English]

SOCIAL SECURITY

SUGGESTED INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PENSION SCHEMES

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the studies which have been made by the Canadian Council on Social Development with regard to public sector pensions and in view of the call which came recently from the Canadian Pension Conference for an inquiry into what is happening in the private sector with regard to pensions, will the minister consider undertaking a thorough review or establishing a public inquiry into pension policy, both public and private, so that we can be sure that things will go well down the road?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I have on several occasions indicated that this issue is currently under study by the government, in particular by my department and the Department of Finance. It might well be that a public inquiry will be useful or necessary but no decision to this effect has yet been taken by the government. At the present time, the studies are taking place on an official level, that is, on an interdepartmental basis, but I am not ruling out the other possibility if it is found necessary to expand those studies.

* * *

[Translation]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BILL C-83 AND ALLEGED RESISTANCE TO SEPARATISM

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the hon. Solicitor General.

Since the minister has already ordered an inquiry into the disclosures made by former RCMP member, Mr. Robert Samson, and since it says in Bill C-83, clause 105(2) which is now being rammed through this House, that any defensive weapon may, without warrant, be searched and taken away from a citizen even in case of organized or apprehended burglaries, I wish to put the following question to the minister: will he tell the House whether or not there is a connection between Bill C-83 and the fight against separatism?

[English]

Hon. Warren Allmand (Solicitor General): No, Mr. Speaker.