

● (1430)

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the problem appears to be confined at the present time to the products of one particular company, and the initial analysis will be confined principally to the products of that company. However, we will be including products from other manufacturers as part of a continuing monitoring program that has been under way for several years.

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POST OFFICE

RANKIN INLET, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES—REQUEST FOR RE-OPENING OF OFFICE

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact there have been no post office services at Rankin Inlet, Northwest Territories, since the mail strike ended on December 2, and in view of the fact that explanations I have received from his officials have been conflicting, will the Postmaster General take steps to ensure that the post office at Rankin Inlet, Northwest Territories, is reopened as soon as possible, as Santa Claus is frustrated?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, the problem there is one of finding a suitable candidate for a vacancy.

An hon. Member: Do you want the job?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Are you available, Bryce?

Mr. Mackasey: I would say sincerely that any recommendations of the hon. gentleman would be taken very seriously. If they will help to fill the vacancy I will be glad to accept any of his recommendations, because he seems to be an exception to the general rule in that corner.

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HEALTH

TROPICAL DISEASES—NEED FOR QUARANTINE AND TREATMENT CENTRES WITH COMPETENT STAFF

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, in view of the rapid increase in the incidence of tropical diseases and the fact that our facilities are inadequate for treating this increasing number, and the additional fact that the Olympic Games will be held in Canada in 1976 with athletes coming from all over the world, for example from countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and West Africa where the disease lassa is endemic and airborne, possibly one of the most dangerous in the world, with the frightening mortality rate of something like 18 per cent to 50 per cent, which could become epidemic in Canada where, as far as is known no specific treatment is available, I would ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare what provisions his department has made to meet the situation by setting up quarantine stations and treatment centres manned by

Oral Questions

physicians who know something about the care and treatment of this disease?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I intend to introduce further amendments to the Quarantine Act during the course of the next session which will permit me to name any highly contagious disease such as Lassa fever, as requiring quarantine. Secondly, we have at the present time a quarantine contingency plan in existence to be activated in the event of the development or outbreak of any highly contagious disease. Thirdly, there is a federal-provincial study group known as the Isolation Facilities Working Group studying at the present time all the existing isolation facilities across the country and evaluating whether these facilities are adequate to meet the necessary needs in the case of a contagious disease being imported into Canada. Finally, we are in close and continuing consultation with other countries, in particular the United States and the United Kingdom, with regard to all areas of contagious diseases.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

TREATMENT OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES BY MALAWI—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PROTEST

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Kootenay): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs I should like to direct my question to his parliamentary secretary, and it follows the report of our strong vote at the United Nations in respect of the rights of man. It is also somewhat appropriate to the season we are about to celebrate. The question concerns disturbing reports of renewed persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Malawi following their expulsion from Mozambique immediately after its liberation. Knowing of the interest in Mozambique's liberation shown by this government, and knowing that Jehovah's Witnesses steadfastly refuse either to vote or bear arms and, therefore, have no one to speak for them in the councils of this world, will the minister make representations to Malawi urging that these people, or those of them who remain, be permitted to live in peace?

[Translation]

Miss Monique Bégin (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I shall convey the proposal of the hon. member to the Secretary of State for External Affairs so that he can study it.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

REQUEST THAT FARE INCREASES NOT EXCEED TEN PER CENT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

As the authorities of the Canadian National announced publicly yesterday afternoon their decision to increase the rates on the lines serving the suburbs of Montreal by 25 per cent from the beginning of January, can the minister tell