

ITC 'too legalistic' in pork ruling, Bedell says

WASHINGTON — After meeting privately for more than an hour with members of the International Trade Commission, U.S. Rep. Berkley Bedell, (D-Iowa), said the Commission's interpretation of trade law is too rigid and lacks common sense.

"It is quite clear to us that the Commissioners are using overly legalistic interpretations of the law, and they're not using common sense," Bedell said. "I explained

to the Commission that operating in this way causes people to have less and less confidence in the government."

Bedell was referring to the ITC ruling in July that a countervailing duty should be imposed on live hogs imported from Canada but not on pork products. Bedell, along with members of the Agriculture subcommittees on livestock and on trade, which Bedell chairs, met with the Commissioners to get a

better understanding of the ITC ruling.

After the meeting, Bedell called the ITC decision a "crazy ruling."

"The ITC apparently based their ruling on the contention that hogs are not the same as processed pork products, so imports of the latter don't affect pork producers," Bedell said. "Common sense should tell you that demand for live hogs is affected by the supply of the finished product. If there's more processed pork on the market, U.S. packers are going to buy fewer live hogs. The price for the producer will drop.

"But the Commissioners don't see it that way. They somehow think pork producers aren't affected by Canadian imports of processed pork. And they don't see that Canadians will be able to get around the duty on live hogs, by shipping more processed pork to the U.S."

Bedell has introduced legislation to correct the problem. The bill would provide for trade relief in cases in which raw agricultural products are used to produce a processed product in a single

continuous line of production, or in which the producers of the raw product and the producers of the processed product are economically interdependent. Bedell's subcommittee, in conjunction with the livestock subcommittee, have had hearings on the legislation and the pork decision.

"We will continue to press for legislation to make sure that we apply some common sense to trade matters," Bedell said.

Does Santa watch TV?

BY
PAMELA REDMOND SATRAN
Copley News Service

Three-year-olds are very inquisitive creatures. And you can bet they ask a lot of questions about Santa Claus, who's both interesting and mysterious.

I've already successfully fielded several questions on Santa, such as, "Where Does Santa Live?" (North Pole); "How come we can't see him?" (He's magic) and, "What does he feed his reindeer?" (Chicken noodle soup, which is why you should eat yours).

But now that Christmas is almost here, it's getting trickier. I'm trying to get through it by pretending I'm the head of a multinational corporation being grilled by Mike Wallace.

For instance:

"Does Santa buy toys at the store?"

"No, he makes them with his elves."

"Does he have the same toys at the store does?"

"Oh, sure. The same kinds."

"Do the elves send toys to the stores?"

"No, the elves just make toys for children."

"How come?"

I answer these open-ended "how comes" the same way generations of parents have: I say: "Because."

For the past year, whenever a toy commercial set Rory shrieking, "I want that!" I've been saying, "You'll have to remember to ask Santa to bring it." Now she's ready to collect on her 2,678-item list, and she's worried that Santa hasn't seen the same commercials she has.

"Does Santa watch TV?" she asks.

"I don't think so," I answer, hedging.

"Then how will he know what to bring me?"

"He'll know."

A few moments of silence.

"I don't want toys from Santa. I want them from the store."

"Oh, no," I say, panicking.

"Toys from Santa are better."

"How come?"

"Because."

In one of Rory's favorite books, "Babar and Father Christmas," Santa Claus takes a little vacation in Babar's kingdom—Elephant Country—before shifting into high gear for the Christmas season.

"Is Santa Claus in Elephant Country right now?" Rory asked me today.

"Un, no. He's at the North Pole."

"Well, when is he going to

Elephant Country?"

I take a deep breath. "Rory, Elephant Country is a pretend place and Babar is a pretend character. They're not real." I wait for the logical follow-up, and am not disappointed.

"Is Santa Claus pretend?" she asks.

"Oh, no," I say. "Santa's real."

I hate to lie about anything, but I want my daughter to believe in Santa Claus. Christmas hasn't been the same for me since I was 12 and a boy I had a crush on burst the bubble I clung to for what may seem an absurdly long time. Maybe I was an extremely gullible child; maybe my parents held up extremely well under questioning. Either way, I'm glad.



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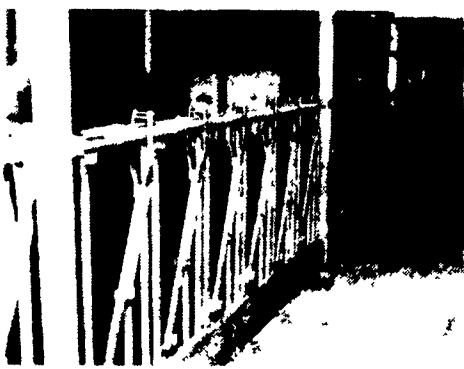
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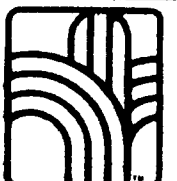
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