

been studied extensively by both the Alberta government and the Ontario government in the past. The hon. member's representation will certainly be noted.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Speaker, I asked this question of the government in February, 1975, and also in July, 1975, and received a very similar answer. Perhaps this question should be directed to the Minister of State (Small Business), but I will direct it also to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. I know we are all aware that small operators in this country are being forced out of business at every turn. Can the minister indicate if his department plans any action to protect the small and independent retailer from further absorption by the major conglomerates?

● (1502)

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, we are working closely with small and independent retailers in order to assist them. The question of the marketing of gas falls within the jurisdiction of the provinces.

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POST OFFICE

POSTAL WALKS FOR NEW SUBURBAN AREAS

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Postmaster General. For the past three years members of parliament from all large urban centres have been endeavouring to get postal walks added to the new suburban areas of their cities. The minister's two predecessors always replied that because of restraints, none could be added. Now we find that in the riding of Scarborough West, 355 homes received a new postal walk at the request of a Liberal member. Can the Postmaster General advise the House when other large urban centres can have the additional postal walks which are needed?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret to advise the hon. member that the question is in precisely the terms of a question previously put and answered.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ROSEAU RIVER PROJECT—VIOLATION OF BOUNDARY WATERS TREATY—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs? In view of the fact that the government of Manitoba has taken the position that the Roseau River project will cause damage in Manitoba, and in view of the fact that the governor of the state of Minnesota has restated his support for that project and is campaigning in Congress for additional funding for it, can the minister indicate whether the government still supports the position held by the government of Manitoba, that the

Privilege—Hon. M. Lambert

Roseau River is in violation of article 4 of the Boundary Waters Treaty?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would prefer to withhold the answer on that question for at least 24 hours. I had a preliminary discussion with the responsible minister from Manitoba this morning. As soon as question period is over, I will be meeting him at the Conference Centre to discuss these questions, so I might be in a better position to elaborate tomorrow or the next day.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. LAMBERT (EDMONTON WEST)—PARLIAMENT HILL—USE OF FACILITIES FOR LIBERAL PARTY CONVENTION

Mr. Speaker: There remains outstanding from last Wednesday some questions relating to a matter of privilege raised by the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert). Perhaps the background should be recalled briefly.

The motion related to the intention to use the buildings of parliament for the purposes of holding a reception coincident with the forthcoming national convention of the Liberal Party of Canada, in a few days. Several months ago, as I have already indicated to the House, an application was made through me, which is in keeping with our regular practice, for the use of the premises for this purpose.

Over the last two or three years I have had ongoing discussions with representatives of all parties in this House as to the appropriate policy in respect to the use of these buildings. I formulated a policy some time ago which attempts to balance, on the one hand, the appropriate use of these buildings for the reception by elected people of their constituents and other visitors, for indeed that is a legitimate aspect of our function as elected members. We have to balance the use of the premises for those purposes against the other conditions that ought to be met here constantly, and that is that these are parliamentary and not commercial premises. They ought not to conflict with events that ought to be held in the area of commercial enterprise. Anything taking place in these buildings certainly ought to have a parliamentary connection and ought to be in keeping with a number of conditions that respect the dignity of the premises.

When the original application was made to me I examined the precedents and the dimensions of the request. I granted permission, which I felt at that time was in keeping with principles which had been established along those lines, and I directed my attention at that time to something in the nature of the dimensions of the requirement of this particular reception. I had researched the precedents in respect of the use of the Hall of Honour which, in addition to the use of the Confederation Room in the West Block, would certainly indicate the size of the reception. After that, as I have indicated, I gave permission and the matter proceeded.