

Oral Questions

[Translation]

HEALTH

POSSIBILITY OF ELIMINATING QUEBEC DENTAL CARE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN IN SPITE OF FEDERAL FIFTY PER CENT CONTRIBUTION

Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Can the minister tell the House whether her Quebec counterpart sought her advice about the possibility of doing away with the dental care plan for young Quebecers and can she also tell us what the Canadian government contribution is to that Quebec health plan?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, no unfortunately, of course I was neither consulted nor informed by my counterpart, Minister Pierre-Marc Johnson, about the possible suppression of the dental care plan. As a Quebecer, I find it most unfortunate because all children in Quebec under age 15 are now provided with dental care under the medicare program. Now, the monthly medicare payments transferred by the Canadian government to the province of Quebec—I apologize, I will later give the hon. member the exact figure—are, for the current year a little over \$2 billion and this amount is slightly less than 50 per cent of all health costs in Quebec including, by the way, dental care for children. Unfortunately, we cannot tell the provinces, because this is their entire responsibility, how to spend those funds and I feel that the public should of course be involved in this debate.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

POLAND—SANCTIONS CONTEMPLATED TO PROTEST IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. From the news this morning I take it the minister is contemplating recommending to cabinet that there be sanctions imposed against Poland. Could the minister say what form these sanctions will take and, particularly, whether they will be accompanied by any positive action to help the people of Poland? I am thinking particularly about the matter of overcoming food shortages. For example, will the minister contemplate having Canada make up some of the corn feed which was formerly supplied by the United States and is absolutely essential to prevent the loss of the poultry industry in Poland?

● (1140)

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I do not believe that I made any statement about what my recommendation to cabinet would

be. I merely said that we would be considering the matter in the near future.

Canada has been doing a great deal to help the people of Poland. We are the principal suppliers of grains to Poland on a per capita basis, and shall continue doing that. We are not considering sanctions of that kind under foreseeable circumstances which would make it difficult for the people of Poland to maintain the minimum standards of life.

CORN FEED SANCTION IMPOSED BY UNITED STATES

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I would like the minister to answer specifically the question whether or not we contemplate making up the very serious shortfall caused by American action. I would be glad if the minister would do that. As the sanctions that are going to be imposed will most likely be diplomatic sanctions rather than economic sanctions, can the minister tell the House whether the government is also contemplating diplomatic sanctions or comparable sanctions against other countries which have repressive regimes that deny trade union rights and which often have a form of martial law? Are we contemplating sanctions against Chile, Turkey, the Philippines, South Africa?

An hon. Member: Be consistent over there.

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): We have not hidden our opinion of repression wherever it occurs in the world.

With respect to the question of making up shortfalls of grains to Poland, I would remind the hon. member that we have a long-term arrangement with Poland to supply grains during this year, and I am sure that the Canadian Wheat Board will supply that grain as rapidly as it is requested and as rapidly as we are able to make the supplies available.

Mr. Jarvis: What about corn feed?

Mr. MacGuigan: I do not know whether that is a feed, Madam Speaker. That is not under my responsibility. It comes under the aegis of the Canadian Wheat Board. I assume that most grains do. I am sure that the Canadian Wheat Board will do its best to make available all the grains we have and which the Polish government wants.

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FINANCE

TRANSFER OF SALES TAX FROM MANUFACTURING TO WHOLESALE LEVEL

Mr. Gordon Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. In his reply today to questions posed by the leader of the New Democratic Party, he mentioned that measures in the budget would bring down unemployment and interest rates. What about bringing down taxes? I call to the minister's attention a report that the