

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**HEALTH AND WELFARE**

## INVESTIGATION OF BIRTH DEFECTS IN BAY OF QUINTE, ONT.

**Mr. J. R. Ellis (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. A week ago Friday the hon. member for Regina East asked a question in the House which could indicate that there is an unnatural amount of dioxine in the Bay of Quinte, and further that it was causing birth defects. I frankly both resent and regret this type of irresponsible scare tactic, and ask if the minister would clarify this situation.

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Data concerning the number of stillbirths in the Bay of Quinte area during a four-year period in the early 1970s—to which a member of the New Democratic Party referred last week—came from a student at the University of Ottawa who carried out this study as a class project. I just want to make that very clear to the House, because I am not saying the project is good or bad. I am just stating its limitations. I have asked my officials to review the project.

● (1440)

**Mr. Ellis:** I have discussed this with the medical officer of health for the area. He finds nothing irregular in the number of birth defects or stillbirths in the area. Would the minister assure us that she will give us facts and figures on that, either now or when the report is ready?

**Miss Bégin:** I can give that assurance. I find it important in view of the technique of spreading anxiety without good findings and data, to make these findings public as soon as I receive them.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**COMMISSION ON TEXTILES AND CLOTHING**INQUIRY CONCERNING GOVERNMENT POSITION ON  
COMMISSION REPORT

**Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Sherbrooke):** Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, I shall address my question to the minister responsible for small businesses.

As suggested in the report submitted nine months ago by the Canadian Textile and Clothing Commission requesting that the government make public its position concerning the recommendations of the commission before March 31, can the minister tell the House whether he intends to make this position public today or tomorrow and, if not, when he intends to do so?

**Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)):** Madam Speaker, as previously indicat-

ed by my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the government will be able to make its position public in this regard in the very near future.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INCOME TAX**

## POLICY RESPECTING TRANSPORTATION PASSES

**Hon. George Hees (Northumberland):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. Is it the intention of the government in future to tax the free transportation enjoyed by those people employed by transportation companies and educational institutions?

**Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue):** Madam Speaker, there was a report suggesting that we would tax passes for employees of air, rail and other modes of transportation. That is an error. The author of that particular article did not consult with the department but simply inferred from an interpretation bulletin that the passes were to be taxed. At the present time, although the situation is under review, these passes are not to be taxed. With regard to tuition, it is true that in future taxation years those people who receive tuition will have to pay taxes on that, but for the 1980 and 1981 taxation years, tuition will not be taxable.

\* \* \*

**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**FUNDING FOR PROGRAMS IN NEW BRUNSWICK AND OTHER  
MARITIME PROVINCES

**Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the minister who is responsible for New Brunswick, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Can the minister tell the House what advice he has given to his colleagues in cabinet concerning the funding, for New Brunswick in particular and Atlantic Canada in general, for such programs as the general development agreement, primary highway strengthening programs, tourism, DREE, and other programs?

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Madam Speaker, I am not sure that this is within my area of responsibility as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. If the hon. member wants an answer, then the advice I give is that we should make sure that the federal government gets credit for federal money spent. Not only that, federal Members of Parliament are also elected to represent the people from my province and they should be consulted before agreements are signed in a definite way.

**Mr. Corbett:** Based on the minister's answer to the House, I assume that he supports the request from the Premier of New Brunswick that the Prime Minister instigate an investigation into the allegations by the hon. member for Restigouche that