

since the beginning of this warning program, would the minister care to revise his grossly arrogant and flippant answer of one day ago?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the answer is not at all, for the good reason that if the hon. member refers to the press release in question, he shall realize that if the trend which was apparent several years ago had been maintained, there would be in Canada 500,000 smokers more than there are now. Moreover he would realize that during the same period the number of smoking adult males decreased by 12 per cent. Therefore I would suggest that he look very carefully at the press releases issued on the subject.

[English]

Mr. Yewchuk: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether the minister would agree to look at his own figures. He would see that the trend has not changed since 1972.

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STATISTICS CANADA

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF BENEFITS FROM 1976 CENSUS—
SUGGESTED RETURN TO INTERVIEW SYSTEM ON TEN-YEAR
BASIS

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the fact that the budget for Statistics Canada has increased substantially this year, and in view of the criticism by Canadians who either refused to answer the complicated questions on the 1976 census forms or are questioning the necessity of such an intricate and costly system of instructions, particularly relating to agriculture, can the minister unequivocally assure Canadians that there will be benefits in return for this inconvenience and added expenditure?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear that there has to be very definite benefit from this kind of survey and this kind of census. The statistics are clearly necessary in the judgment not only of Statistics Canada but of this House and all the other bodies that have asked for and have from time to time endorsed this kind of census taking. I am not sure if I got the real point of what the hon. member was asking, however.

Mr. Towers: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that census takers who worked in earlier years as well as in the current census say that in their opinion the previous method was much superior, will consideration be given to reverting to the interview system on a ten-year basis rather than the five-year, or to, having the census taken in conjunction with the provincial or municipal census to avoid duplication and thereby cut administrative costs?

Mr. Jamieson: Mr. Speaker, the most I can do at the moment is to say that I will be glad to consider it. I think the fact that it is being done on a five-year basis, at least to

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some degree in order to supplement the ten-year census, is an indication that a great many people including literally thousands of representations from outside, argue that the ten-year time span was too broad. I will be glad to take it as a representation and give the hon. member an answer from the people at Statistics Canada.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

ALLEGED DELAY IN RECEIPT OF OLD AGE PENSION
CHEQUES—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare is in respect of the tardiness of cheques, both for old age benefits and supplementary benefits, which are now late. This is said to be as a result of a foul up in the computer. Have the brain surgeons in the computer field been able to put this thing back together and when can the beneficiaries expect to receive the cheques up to date and in proper amounts?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for bringing this case to my attention. If it is a situation that is particular to his region or riding, I will be glad to look at it specifically, but I was under the impression that the problems which cropped up a few months ago had been solved for some time. If there are specific cases the hon. member would like to bring to my attention I will be glad to examine them carefully and see that measures are taken to correct them.

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[English]

ANTI-INFLATION BOARD

REQUEST THAT MINISTER INTERVENE IN CASE OF AIRCRAFT
OPERATIONS GROUP

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Will the minister contact the chairman of the Anti-Inflation Board on behalf of the aircraft operations group, many of whom are still on strike, as the minister must be aware, because their contract was negotiated in good faith and by mutual agreement with the government? I wonder if the minister is also aware that in Toronto alone 600 aircraft are grounded because certificates cannot be issued?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, parliament has enacted the Anti-Inflation Act for the purpose of controlling prices and also incomes, in particular in the public sector. I would have to say that the view I have generally taken is that parties who feel aggrieved by the decision of the board should resort to the procedures that parliament has provided. I, as minister, should not deal with the various individual decisions affecting parties by directing the manner in which the Board should dispose of the matter.