

*Oral Questions*

They should be in bed at 71 years of age having milk and cookies! [English]

How can the Prime Minister make a statement that is so insulting and out of touch with Canadian seniors?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**An hon. member:** No, he said that about Liberal senators.

[Translation]

**Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)):** Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the statement, but it seems to me that it would be quite appropriate and applicable to Senator Hébert, if we keep in mind his behaviour in recent days.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mrs. Vézina:** I will continue by stating that we as a government give priority to elderly people. We have programs which attest to the fact that the elderly make up an active and dynamic component of Canadian society. We will continue to defend our affirmative action programs for seniors, and I have the full support of both the Cabinet and the government in these measures.

[English]

**Mr. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan):** Mr. Speaker, criticism against seniors is criticism against seniors.

My supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister again. From the Prime Minister's comments, are Canadians to conclude that people such as former Governor General Roland Michener, author W. O. Mitchell and human rights activist Rabbi Gunter Plaut, all of whom are over 71, should stop contributing and go to bed?

Is the government not aware that the seniors of this nation continue to make the country what it is today?

[Translation]

**Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration) and Minister of State (Seniors)):** See, Mr. Speaker, the behaviour of Senator Hébert does provoke a passionate response! I am convinced that the kind of behaviour we saw on TV last week is an insult to older people who are full-fledged and responsible citizens anxious to do their share in the Canadian community.

## AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture.

The minister should be aware that, while American negotiators at the GATT are pressuring Canada to give up on supply-management, American politicians in Washington have passed a bill through both houses of Congress which will set up their very own system of supply-management in dairy.

Has the minister informed the Americans that their position on supply-management is totally hypocritical? Has he asked them if they will now, given this recent development, support our position at the GATT?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the Canadian position has been well documented and well thought out. It is a balanced and realistic position. We do not take our marching orders from the United States of America.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same minister. He seems to be staying surprisingly silent while editorial boards across the country attack supply-management based on faulty information, I might add, that his ministry gave out a few weeks ago on subsidies to dairy farmers.

Will the minister stand in the House today and tell Canadian consumers the truth, that the actual amount of dairy subsidy given to farmers is only one-tenth of the \$2.2 billion he claims to be giving dairy farmers, and that the only reason we pay more for milk here in Canada is because the Americans subsidize their dairy producers in billions of dollars?

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.