

Oral Questions

Is the objective still 10 per cent for Atlantic Canada, and will the agency work with the aerospace industry in Atlantic Canada to ensure that the maximum benefit is achieved?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure my colleague that the regional distribution of space agency contracts is very much a part of this government's policy. We have to realize that historically the space industry in Canada, in essence, developed somewhat unevenly across the country.

There may be a lag in terms of when we reach those distributions, but I can assure the hon. member that it is and will remain this government's policy that we work with the space industry itself to ensure that all regions of the country receive a benefit and the real benefit from the whole space program.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. On February 15, Canadian producers were to get a higher price for industrial milk. It seems the government changed the formula used previously to establish the value of inherited farms in Quebec, so that the increase was cancelled, despite a substantial increase in operating costs over the past year. Why did the government change the way it calculates costs for producers and why this discrimination against industrial milk producers in Canada and more specifically in Québec?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I will have to correct some of the figures quoted by the hon. member for Papineau—Saint-Michel. If this year we had followed the usual procedure for setting the price of industrial milk, it would have meant a reduction of about \$1.34, and after lengthy discussions, the Minister of Agriculture, the other interested parties and myself reached the conclusion that since we have a task force representing all interested parties, something unheard of under the Liberals, it was preferable to consult those concerned. Thus, we have a task force in which industry, producers, and all people involved in the dairy sector are represented and which is now working on

a report within the next few months that will help us decide on a formula that is agreeable to all parties. We have decided to maintain the price at its present level instead of letting it go down, which was very good news for Canadian milk producers.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer was long and belaboured, while the situation is actually quite simple.

Industrial milk producers have clearly established that their costs have gone up by 2.8 per cent, and that as a result, prices should go up accordingly.

If the minister needs outside experts to justify his poor decision-making and his government's bad policies, I would simply ask him to review this decision which, I think, was probably not made in Ottawa, but perhaps in Geneva or Washington, and give industrial milk producers what they deserve.

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, this government doesn't need any long and belaboured advice from the opposition, which left the industrial milk question on the back burner for more than five years. Five years before we came to power, Canadian milk producers didn't know the meaning of a long-term dairy policy, Mr. Speaker. This government introduced a long-term dairy policy, which we have promised to extend, but we will do that in consultation with farm producers and all the people in the industry, Mr. Speaker.

We don't need the advice of the previous Liberal government which had simply encouraged farmers to object. What we are now seeing, as the hon. member ought to know, is that farm producers—

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[English]

NATIVE PROGRAMS

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiag): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

The minister is responsible for developing procedures to implement the new business policy announced in the budget which will, with some limited exceptions, eliminate grants to business and make more financial contributions repayable.