

## Oral Questions

## REDISTRIBUTION

PROPOSED INCREASE IN NUMBER OF SEATS ALLOTTED  
QUEBEC AND ONTARIO BUT NOT BRITISH COLUMBIA—  
REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION

**Mr. John Reynolds (Burnaby-Richmond-Delta):** I have a question for the government House leader involving redistribution of seats. As the government House leader knows, in the last session we delayed it, but under that program the province of British Columbia would have obtained three more seats, the province of Ontario three more, and the province of Quebec would have lost two. We understand that under the bill to be presented next week, the province of British Columbia will still gain three seats but the province of Ontario will gain seven and Quebec will gain one. We wonder why, if these two provinces have had their seats increased, Ontario by four and Quebec by three, British Columbia is not having the number of its seats increased.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think the question clearly anticipates not only government policy but, by its very nature, what will be before the House in the form of legislation for debate next week. Therefore, I cannot allow the question to be asked.

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## VETERANS AFFAIRS

## DATE OF TABLING OF HERMANN REPORT

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** My question is for the Minister of Veterans Affairs. Would the minister kindly advise us as to when he proposes to table the Hermann report which he told us would be tabled immediately after the resumption of this session and is now well over a month old?

**Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Yes, I can table the Hermann report soon. The reason it has not yet been tabled is that we have been very busy in the Veteran Affairs Committee. However, it will be tabled shortly.

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## CONSUMER AFFAIRS

## PURPOSE OF SUBSIDY ON SKIM MILK POWDER

**Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Will the minister inform the House if the purpose of the government subsidy of 24 cents per pound on skim milk powder was and is to give a lower price to the consumer?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** I think it would be better if the hon. member put the question to the Minister of Agriculture who is administering these subsidies.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Mr. Speaker, may I direct that question now to the Minister of Agriculture.

[Mr. Danson.]

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, the latest report I have come yesterday. Every retail outlet was passing this saving on to the consumers except for one, and yesterday they thought they would be doing it. I have not received a report on that this morning.

● (1450)

SUBSIDY ON SKIM MILK POWDER—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE  
CONSUMERS RECEIVE BENEFIT

**Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** My supplementary question is directed now to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the irresponsible position which the Retail Council of Canada has taken in this situation by informing retailers that they are not obliged to pass on the government subsidy to the consumer, will the minister inform the House if he intends to continue to license the theft of public funds by the retailers?

[Translation]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I feel that the reply the hon. Minister has just made clearly indicates that the greater majority of retailers—with only one exception—have passed on the subsidy to consumers. Having discussed the matter with him, I know that he was ready to cancel this subsidy, should retailers refuse to pass it on to consumers.

[English]

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Mr. Speaker, a point of order. It was the minister's own Food Prices Review Board which reported retailers and processors were not passing on the government subsidy to the consumer. In effect, his own board has informed us that this is not being done.

[Translation]

**Mr. Ouellet:** The answer is that, at the present time, not only is the subsidy passed on to consumers, but I have been advised that in some cases, prices have been reduced, to compensate for the inconveniences of the previous situation, when the subsidy was not passed on. I feel that the hon. member wants to start a storm in a tea-cup, although he has received every assurance that this subsidy is actually passed on to consumers and that the Minister of Agriculture intends to deal severely with those who, once again, would not pass on this subsidy to consumers.

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[English]

## POST OFFICE

SUGGESTED ISSUANCE OF STAMPS TO COMMEMORATE  
MEETING OF INTERNATIONAL SOIL SCIENTISTS IN 1978

**Mr. Arnold Malone (Battle River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Postmaster General. For the recent meeting of international soil scientists in the Soviet Union that country issued a commemorative stamp. Canada will be honoured in 1978 when the meeting of international soil scientists takes place in Edmonton. This will require about 8,000 letters to organize it and will bring 3,000 to 4,000 international guests to this country. Can the minister assure the House that Canada will issue a commemorative stamp to mark the occasion?