

minister, and I am wondering if he now has that statement. If not, I would ask him to undertake to place it before us tomorrow, or as soon as he can get the complete statement. I think it is very important that this chamber be provided with the complete statement of the minister.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I do not have the text of the minister's remarks. Indeed, it may be that no text was issued. I rather think the comments in question were random comments. The Minister of Agriculture has been known in the past to make random comments on a wide range of subjects, including the Senate. He very frequently makes such statements without the issuance of formal press releases. It may be that no text is available.

The matter is under review, and I will attempt to obtain that statement.

Senator Sparrow: I thank the Leader of the Government. Let me say that I will be very upset if it turns out that this chamber made the decision to refer this whole question of off-track betting to a committee of the Senate simply because the Minister of Agriculture is prone to making random statements and random requests of the Leader of the Government in this chamber.

Senator Langlois: Question!

Senator Sparrow: I have asked my question.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I think the issue is a bit overblown. Other politicians, including some in the party to which I hold loyalty, make statements from time to time which may not be necessarily in exact accord with party or government policy at a particular time. That happens in the normal course of events in politics. Why, it is known to occur from time to time in the great historical party represented across the way from me.

Senator Flynn: Never!

Senator Sparrow: I do not wish to prolong the discussion, but my further question is whether it is normal for members of the cabinet to make such statements. The Leader of the Government, being a member of the cabinet, might be able to answer that question.

Senator Flynn: I think he is of the same kind, an endangered species.

PARLIAMENT

DISTRIBUTION OF LAPEL PINS TO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—QUESTION

Senator Guay: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government in the Senate in relation to lapel pins that were distributed to members of the House of Commons earlier today by the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Honourable James Jerome. The lapel pins are round and are made of silver. They have a maple leaf background and a gold mace depicted on them.

In view of the fact that honourable senators are also members of Parliament and are, in my opinion, equal to members of the House of Commons, I would ask the Leader of the Government to look into the possibility of identical or similar pins being distributed to members of this place.

Senator Langlois: We are not equal. We are on top.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I do not know whether these buttons are available to honourable senators, but the question will be taken as notice. However, I am wondering what happens when members of the other place lose their buttons. Is there a replacement fee?

Senator Guay: To answer the Leader of the Government, if they lose their buttons, they have to pay a considerable fee to get a second one.

Senator Denis: I have a supplementary question. I have in my hand a pencil with the words "House of Commons" on it. This pencil is given away in the other place. Perhaps we could be provided with pencils with the word "Senate" printed on them.

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I would not like to see the Question Period become a discussion devoted in any great measure to buttons, trinkets, pencils and novelties. I am sure that the Internal Economy Committee will consider, in an appropriate fashion, the comments that have been made.

[Translation]

SPORTS

PROPOSED NHL AND WHA MERGER—QUESTION

Senator Asselin: Honourable senators, my question is directed to the Leader of the Government. For some time now there has been talk of a merger between the NHL and WHA hockey clubs. In this connection, in a pre-election statement, the government promised Quebec City and the city of Edmonton \$5 million to enlarge their arenas if the two leagues are merged into one. Now, we heard recently, following a meeting of the directors of both leagues, that their idea of the proposed merger has been set aside.

Senator Langlois: The matter has not been settled yet.

Senator Asselin: Wait till I finish my question. It seems that the directors who were most opposed to that merger were the owners of the Canucks hockey club of Vancouver. It has been reported that Montreal followed suit, that is Molson Breweries of Montreal who own the Canadiens. If there is no merger, will the government honour its promise of a \$5 million grant to the cities concerned to enlarge their arenas? If this were not justified, could the \$5 million promised to Edmonton and Quebec City be granted the minor leagues to help amateur hockey in Canada?

● (2110)

[English]

Senator Perrault: Honourable senators, I understand this evening that again there is some indication that there may be an expansion of the NHL to include Canadian cities. I under-