

*Oral Questions*

that he can ascertain the implications for the economy, jobs, and cost to the taxpayers of this merger?

[Translation]

**Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post):** Like any other proposed deal, Mr. Speaker, this one is now being examined by the Director who will intervene immediately should he uncover a breach of the existing legislation.

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[English]

**CUSTOMS AND EXCISE****EFFECT OF PROLONGED INSPECTIONS ON TOURISM**

**Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. Recent reports claim that prolonged Customs inspections at the Peace Bridge have discouraged large numbers of American tourists from visiting Ontario. What assurance can the Minister give that there will not be unreasonable delays at the bridge during the coming tourist season?

**Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, I remind my colleague that Customs inspectors have a special responsibility in this regard. However, I have already initiated some inquiries into the matter and, to the extent we can properly make some accommodations, we will make every attempt to carry that out.

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**HEALTH****REPORTED PCB LEAKAGE FROM HYDRO-QUEBEC INSTALLATION**

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. On April 7 it was reported that for two years PCBs have been leaking from a Hydro-Quebec installation into the Sabrevois River which in turn flows into the St. Lawrence. What plan does the Minister have to protect public health from contamination of drinking water by toxic chemicals?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, my Department, along with the Department of the Environment, is well aware of the issue the Hon. Member has raised. The situation is being monitored carefully. The information I have is that there is no immediate health hazard or danger. However, the Department and officials will continue to monitor the situation.

**REQUEST FOR INTRODUCTION OF SAFE DRINKING WATER LEGISLATION**

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport):** Mr. Speaker, in light of these frequent developments will the Minister introduce a federal safe drinking water Act or, as a minimum, a set of stringent standards for toxic chemicals not covered by existing guidelines?

**Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, that is a valid suggestion. My colleague, the Minister of the Environment, and I both carry responsibility in this area, he for the cleanup of the environment and I from the point of view of health safety. We are examining the question of whether, if we go that route, what should be the provisions to cover some of the issues which, under present regulations and legislation, have not been covered.

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**TRADE****CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS—CANADIAN PATENT LAW**

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister. He knows that the National Association of Manufacturers, in testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, indicated that the U.S. Government has received repeated assurances that Canada's present compulsory licensing law, Section 41 of the Canadian patent law, would be amended. We have been told that is not true. Therefore will the Prime Minister undertake to contact all of the members of that committee who are about to vote on a very crucial question and inform them that Canada has no such intention?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any need for us to supplement the extensive reading of *Hansard* which is undertaken by members of that committee, particularly those portions which reflect the comments of the House Leader of the NDP.

● (1450)

**CANADIAN POSITION**

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I am not exactly sure why the Minister feels that this is a humorous matter. I will direct my supplementary question to whomever wants to answer. It makes no difference to me, as long as someone gets up and says something. Is the Government prepared to inform the members of the Senate Finance Committee in Washington that not only are we not prepared to rescind Section 41 of the licensing Act of Canada as it affects pharmaceuticals, we are also not prepared to negotiate away UIC benefits for fishermen, and we are not prepared to see an