

*Oral Questions*

omnibus bill with reference to capital punishment and other serious matters to confuse this legislation which was brought about not by the minister but as a result of the position taken by the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice):** Mr. Speaker, the proposal that I have is to include the section amending section 613 of the Criminal Code with the sections in the omnibus bill which have previously largely been referred to and are apart from any other major issues.

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**AIR CANADA****PROPOSAL AUDITOR GENERAL BE APPOINTED JOINT AUDITOR OF CORPORATION**

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport. In light of the rather extraordinary statement made by the auditor of Air Canada that he deemed an obviously doubtful payment of \$100,000 to be too small to warrant his concern for the purpose of an audit—an amount which even in these days of inflation is still not chicken feed—will the hon. gentleman give serious consideration to advising or proposing to his colleagues that the Auditor General of Canada be appointed joint auditor of the accounts of Air Canada?

**Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, there is a very serious inquiry going on in Montreal, and I think that everyone has full confidence in Mr. Justice Estey. I will not say anything before I receive his recommendations and opinion.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am not asking about the inquiry; I am asking the minister a simple question. Is he prepared to consider appointing the Auditor General of Canada as joint auditor of Air Canada? This question has nothing to do with the inquiry that is going on.

**Mr. Marchand (Langelier):** If this is a recommendation by Mr. Justice Estey, we will surely consider it very seriously.

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**CONSUMER AFFAIRS****POSSIBLE DISCONTINUANCE OF BOX 99—FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR MUNICIPALLY OPERATED OFFICES**

**Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Can the minister tell me whether it is the government's intention to discontinue its Box 99 service, which to many people is the only really visible effort on the part of the government with respect to consumer problems?

[Translation]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, a recent Canadian Press release gave completely erroneous information regarding

[Mr. Woolliams.]

P.O. Box 99 service. Not only is there no question of ending this service but, on the contrary, we intend to diversify and decentralize that consumer assistance and information service.

[English]

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to hear that answer. May I ask the minister whether he would consider augmenting that service by supporting in a financial way municipally operated consumer offices, as he and I have discussed with respect to the township of Nepean as the leading example in Canada?

[Translation]

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Speaker, to the extent where the financial resources of my department will allow, we clearly intend not only to increase the staff in charge of P.O. Box 99 service but also to assist, through subsidies, Canadian local organizations to better inform and help the consumers.

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● (1150)

[English]

**POST OFFICE****ALLEGATION BY RALPH NADER OF TAMPERING WITH MAIL AND CONVEYANCE OF INFORMATION TO UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES**

**Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Solicitor General, perhaps I could address my question to the Postmaster General who has a pure gold reputation in these matters.

**An hon. Member:** A quarter ounce.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** My question is related to the recent letter released by Ralph Nader, the consumer advocate in the United States. Now that the Solicitor General has indicated that there has been co-operation between the RCMP and U.S. agencies, especially in seeking information against crime, I should like to ask the Postmaster General if this co-operation involves tampering with the mail as indicated in Mr. Nader's letter?

**Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, I am not a lawyer but I would suggest that organized crime knows no particular boundary, so if there is a maximum co-operation between the RCMP and the FBI it is highly desirable rather than the contrary. On the other hand, it is not the policy of the Post Office to permit any tampering with first class mail by the RCMP or any other agency, nor to the best of my knowledge has any such request been made by U.S. authorities to the RCMP. Second, third and fourth class mail does provide, through regulations, some limited access in this area. For instance, if we have reason to suspect that explosives are in the mail in the form of parcels, certainly we have a right to search certain parcels. In other words, the right is there under the regulations for second, third and fourth class mail but under very, very limited circumstances. There are no such regulations pertaining to first class mail. We have also an obligation to protect the privacy of private citizens.