

and Commerce. In his absence I will direct it to his Parliamentary Secretary. Today the *Globe and Mail* indicates that employees of Statistics Canada are to be fingerprinted by the RCMP.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Robinson: Will the parliamentary secretary advise whether that is correct and, if so, what is the purpose for which these fingerprints are being taken?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. As the hon. member knows, he cannot ask a minister or a parliamentary secretary to deny or confirm a press report, but perhaps we might assume that the question was asked directly.

Mr. Bruce Howard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada has a very serious responsibility in respect to confidentiality of information in its care and in line with a review of security provisions it is going to issue new identity cards to its employees. The new cards will include the name and a picture of the employee but will not include the fingerprints of the employee. The RCMP is not involved in any way.

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AGRICULTURE

CORN—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON POLICY RESPECTING PRICE AND STORAGE

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent-Essex): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address my question to the Minister of Agriculture. It relates to the continuing deterioration of commercial corn prices in Canada. Is it the minister's intention to make an early statement on motions about government policy in this respect, and will he include in this statement an indication of whether the government has made an assessment of the total production of corn in eastern Canada and the availability of storage, or will our harvest operation find our eastern elevators filled with western barley and United States corn?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have answered similar questions earlier to the effect that I have had a number of conversations with representatives of the corn industry, both here in Ottawa and in the corn growing areas. We are looking at this matter on an urgent basis and as soon as there is an announcement to be made I will make it.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

PACKAGING AND LABELLING BILL—REASON FOR DELAY IN PROCLAMATION

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, in view of the far-reaching effect the packaging and labelling bill will have on business and industry generally, will the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs advise the House why this bill has not been proclaimed?

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it has not been proclaimed because we are drafting the regulations. In the process of doing that we are consulting with industries to avoid any undue disruption of practices. We also want the regulations to be of maximum assistance to the consumer because the packaging and labelling legislation represents a major advance for consumers in regard to packaging and labelling in Canada.

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VETERANS AFFAIRS

TRANSFER OF LANCASTER HOSPITAL TO PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES—PROTECTION OF EMPLOYEES' CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Veterans Affairs related to the renewed discussions on the possible transfer of the Lancaster DVA hospital from the federal government to the province of New Brunswick. As far as the minister is responsible, will he give a personal guarantee that the jobs of federal employees will be protected in respect of wages, salaries and other conditions?

Hon. Jean-Eudes Dubé (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I wish to assure the hon. member that as far as I am concerned we will make every effort to protect all our employees and make sure they work under the same conditions in the future as they have in the past.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Veterans Affairs whether the employees concerned are being consulted in respect of these matters?

Mr. Dubé: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Officials of my department have been in consultation with officials of the unions of these employees. At the present time we are discussing the matter with officials of the province of New Brunswick, but before anything is finalized all parties concerned will have been duly consulted.

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[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

POSITION OF AGREEMENT WITH NOVA SCOTIA— REQUEST FOR STATEMENT

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion.

Following his recent visit to St. Romuald, has the minister received at least some token of gratitude from the Golden Eagle Company, because the government granted a \$5,000,000 subsidy to that company as well as a tax exemption of the same order? Has the minister had any news from that firm since the day he was refused the right to speak?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I have read in the newspapers