

*Oral Questions*

government to protest this infringement of the rights of journalists in that country?

**Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I am, of course, familiar with the case the hon. member mentioned. He used words such as "infringement". I am not sure if in the truly legalistic sense there is any infringement. As I understand the matter, a limited extension was being sought and the Chinese authorities did not choose to renew or extend. Therefore, whether there is a basis upon which to lodge a formal protest in diplomatic terms, is not clear. In so far as the gentleman himself is concerned, the last information I had was that there had been no request to us by him personally or by his employers to take any action. As I believe the hon. member is aware, that is normally the basis of such action. We are continuing to keep the matter under review but at the moment in any event it does not appear that any useful purpose would be served. I might say that I have also had discussions with the Chinese authorities with a view to opening considerably the access by Canadian journalists within China in a general way.

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the word should have been "curtailment" of the activities. It is my understanding that the Canadian embassy in Peking has protested on a number of occasions, two at least to my knowledge, about the freedom of movement within that country. Despite what the minister said about steps he has taken, I wonder whether he can indicate to the House any positive steps he is taking to ensure that western journalists will be able to report freely on things going on in China, as they see fit, for Canadian and western readers.

**Mr. Jamieson:** Mr. Speaker, to elaborate on the latter part of my previous answer, during a visit of the foreign minister of the People's Republic of China, I made a general representation to him about greater access by Canadian journalists. In addition and subsequent to his visit, at least two representations have been made specifically on behalf of Canadian journalists to my knowledge so in that sense we are indeed urging them to provide more access to Canadians. I have not seen the results of those representations yet, but the general reaction appears to be encouraging.

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**SOCIAL SECURITY****REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF MINISTER'S STATEMENT DENYING PROGRAMS TO THOSE NOT IN NEED**

**Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca):** Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Last week in response to questions the minister said that in order to finance the guaranteed annual income she would, to quote her exact words, "take away from those who do not need universal programs" in reference to family allowances and old age pensions. In view of the stir this has caused among old age pensioners in particular, would the minister explain what in

[Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich).]

her view constitutes the people who do not need universal programs with reference to the family allowance and old age pension.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the hon. member was present at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs which I attended yesterday afternoon for the second time, when the estimates of my department were reviewed and when I clearly explained that our programs—which reflect the position of the government and obviously has my full support—to which he is referring are universal and that there is no way they are going to be modified.

[*English*]

**Mr. Yewchuk:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is appropriate for the minister to say I was not at the committee meeting when she came in only for the last 20 minutes of it herself. In dealing with this question she did not clarify it but simply waffled on it. I should like the minister to tell the House what she meant when she said she would take away from those who did not need the universal programs. She has not explained that in committee, has not explained it in the House and I think she owes the country an explanation.

[*Translation*]

**Miss Bégin:** Mr. Speaker, we are talking here of social security and the objective of the government as well as that of my department—and I have stated it repeatedly—is to detect the weakest groups in our society, those which are the most in need, so as to grant them additional help.

[*English*]

**REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION****REASON FOR GRANT TO ITALIAN COMPANY TO MANUFACTURE REFRIGERATORS IN QUEBEC**

**Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In view of the fact that his department recently announced a \$2,657,500 incentive grant to the Merloni Finanziaria group of Italy to establish a factory in Quebec to manufacture small refrigerators and freezers, and in view of the fact that other Canadian manufacturers in this market, specifically, the Canadian Manufacturing Appliance Company Limited of London, Ontario, has already told its work force that the small appliances market is soft and all indications are for continuing soft markets and future lay-offs may result, can the minister tell this House why his department is using the taxes of Canadian workers to subsidize a foreign corporation in Canada and create unemployment in Canada?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion):** It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that an offer has been made to this company which will establish itself in Quebec in the near future and I should also tell the hon. member that last