

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Lamontagne: Mr. Speaker, we will comply with the law and avail ourselves of section 13 of the Financial Administration Act.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

GOVERNMENT POLICY ON SUBSIDIES FOR SKIM MILK POWDER

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I should like to direct my question to his parliamentary secretary. It has to do with subsidies on skim milk. In view of the fact that a litre of 2 per cent milk in Yellowknife costs \$1.58, \$2.90 in Norman Wells, and at Tuktoyaktuk a litre of milk, when it is available, costs \$1.86—three pounds of powdered milk costs more than \$5—does the parliamentary secretary have anything to report to the House regarding government policy as it concerns northerners, in relation to skim milk subsidies?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Caron (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, funds for the skim milk subvention program were cut off the 1978 budget mainly because it failed to meet its objectives; in fact, low income families did not avail themselves of the program.

I want to say to the hon. member that approximately \$589 million are still available for low income families, through various support programs.

[English]

Mr. Firth: Mr. Speaker, I should like to bring a couple of facts to the attention of the parliamentary secretary, in the hope he might be able to advise the House what he plans to do. The subsidization of skim milk powder is extremely important to the Northwest Territories. Many of the people who live there are poor, and the cost of living generally is very high. Could the hon. gentleman tell us whether the government has any plans to meet the particular needs of the north in these circumstances?

[Translation]

Mr. Caron: Mr. Speaker, I take note of the hon. member's question about remote areas and I will submit it to the minister.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

COST OF CABINET MEMBERS' VISIT TO WESTERN CANADA—
POSSIBLE VISIT TO EASTERN PROVINCES

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Over the

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

weekend the Prime Minister explained that his western junket was taking government to the people. Also, the Deputy Prime Minister told us on Friday that he would be doing government business in the west. So that the people might have a better chance to judge the value of this type of excursion, does the government agree that the taxpayers have a right to know what this excursion is costing them?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): We have never sought to conceal information with regard to the cost of travel once a question was put on the order paper.

Mr. Nowlan: I can assure the hon. gentleman there will be several questions on the order paper. Hopefully, we shall get answers before parliament dissolves.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is of particular interest to the Deputy Prime Minister. After ten years, like Rip Van Winkle, the cabinet and the Prime Minister eloped and went west. Does the Deputy Prime Minister know whether there are plans to take this political road show into Atlantic Canada, where there is very real economic disparity and a real need for the government to communicate with the people?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, that proposal is under consideration, but I am not sure the hon. member would survive the impact.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ASSIST AREAS OF DISPARITY

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In view of the serious and rising unemployment conditions as reported, for example, in today's *Globe and Mail*—with particular reference to Glasgow, Nova Scotia—what new initiative does the minister have in mind to focus more specifically his department's resources in the critical areas of disparity in this country, particularly bearing in mind the decline in real terms of his departmental budget?

● (1452)

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): As always, Mr. Speaker, there is intensive work done in analyzing and examining with industrialists and the governments of the four Atlantic provinces every project likely to yield valid economic results. Those are constant analyses, and we have recently signed agreements with these governments. I believe that in the few weeks to come, and indeed