

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, October 17, 1990

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

NATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WEEK

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians benefit from developments in science and technology: living standards rise, industries become more competitive, agriculture becomes more efficient, and new career opportunities evolve for our youth.

This week is National Science and Technology Week. Educational institutions, laboratories and museums are opening their doors, inviting us to renew our curiosity and to increase our awareness of Canada's many proud accomplishments in science and technology.

On October 20 the chemistry department of the University of Alberta is opening its doors to the public, and everyone is invited for a tour of its facilities.

The future promises great opportunities for Canada and our youth as we open the doors to explore, develop and build on the paths that science and technology provide for us.

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AGRICULTURE

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, Monday and yesterday in this House the Minister for International Trade stated that the Minister of Agriculture should be ashamed of the \$8.8 billion given to Canadian farmers as subsidies. That \$8.8 billion is a fictitious figure. It is about 40 per cent higher than the actual figure.

For example, papers filed in Geneva on October 1 show that Canadian dairy farmers received \$2.2 billion in subsidies, when in fact the only cash subsidy given to dairy farmers is \$261 million and that goes only to industrial milk producers.

The \$2.2 billion is a concocted figure, most of it being the difference between what United States farmers get for milk versus Canadian farmers, and then calling it a subsidy. This game of smoke and mirrors ignores the fact that Canadian farm inputs are much higher than those in the United States.

I ask the minister of trade to stop this charade and stop playing games. He must be honest with Canadian farmers and support them or resign.

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[*Translation*]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, automobile manufacturers have just announced that they will offer a discount equal to the difference between the 7 per cent GST and the 13.5 per cent manufacturers' tax.

The offer seems generous, at first, but it is misleading advertising.

Basically, these are just end-of-year discounts.

Even worse, the promised reduction does not cover the \$800 per vehicle, on average, consumers are supposed to save with the GST.

In fact, this so-called GST discount is based on the manufacturer's suggested price. That price is often unknown, falsified or inflated.

I therefore urge the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to investigate this case of misleading advertising. I also want automobile manufacturers to appear before the House Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations, and explain why they should not be charged for spreading misleading advertising.