

THE PRESS

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH NATIONAL PRESS COUNCIL—ONTARIO BODY'S VIEWS

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Multiculturalism. In a statement released yesterday, the Ontario Press Council stated that it views with great apprehension the implication of government intervention contained in the proposal to create a state-sponsored national press council. Will the minister agree to the Ontario Press Council's request that "no national council of any kind should be considered until every opportunity has been explored for encouraging full participation by newspapers in forming voluntary regional or provincial councils"?

Hon. Jim Fleming (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that the hon. member did not refer to other parts of that release which are largely supportive, I believe, of the measures put forward by the government. The Davey Senate Commission in 1970 suggested press councils. It is now 12 years later. The newspapers have had a long time to react. They will have the period of time between now and the introduction of legislation and, indeed, the successful passage of legislation. I have already publicly said that if various newspapers voluntarily join press councils, that would be our press councils.

Mr. Clark: The big stick.

Mr. Beatty: Madam Speaker, apparently the minister rejects that proposal by the Ontario Press Council.

FUNDING FOR COUNCIL

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Is the minister aware of the statement by one of the public representatives of the Ontario Council, Reverend Brad Massman, who said that such a body would be "twenty million dollars of the taxpayers' money thrown into the sewer". If so, will the minister tell the House how he can justify this wasteful and dangerous expenditure of tax dollars at a time when the federal deficit has grown to some \$16 billion?

Hon. Jim Fleming (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Madam Speaker, I might quote another member of the Press Council who is not always the best friend of the government, Doris Anderson, who encouraged us to proceed with everything we proposed.

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METRIC CONVERSION

MINISTER'S MEETING WITH RETAIL INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, my question today is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and stems from his commitment in this House on May 14 to call together a working group on scales to determine if the government would exempt small businesses

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from purchasing metric weigh scales. He has called that meeting for Monday. Unfortunately, he has chosen an employee of the Toledo Weigh Scale Company to act as chairman, and six members only of the 50 members of that sector. How does the minister justify calling only six members of the 50-member sector, none of them independent retail grocers, none of them major corporate food chains, and appointing as chairman an employee of the American Toledo Weigh Scale Company?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Holy Toledo!

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, my consultations with the industry are continuing. Despite the statements of the hon. member, these consultations are going well. When I am ready, I will make a decision, at the appropriate time.

• (1500)

REQUEST FOR ENLARGEMENT OF INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The corporate manager of Loblaw's says that 85 per cent of them do not want metric in retail since the United States has moved off it and is back to imperial. Will the minister please answer why he refuses to include in the sector group on Monday, after five years of working with that 50-member group, instead of bringing in the Toledo weigh scale company and only six representatives, two of them federally funded groups, to vote us into metric against the wishes of the food retail sector?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, despite the fact that the hon. member repeats his question a little louder, what he is saying does not make any more sense. I listened to his question. I indicated to him that this was one meeting for consultation. Other meetings will take place. We will have extensive consultation, and it will not be only with a few members of the sector group. When the consultation process has been completed to my satisfaction, I will make the appropriate announcement. Until that time I recommend to the hon. member that he cool off, forget about metric for a little while, and concentrate on some other worth-while cause. I am sure he was not elected to Parliament only to think about metric.

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PETITION

MR. FLIS—POLAND—IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the table the two hundred and seventieth report of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he examined the petition presented by the hon. member