

Oral Questions

NATIONAL DEFENCE

LOCKHEED CONTRACT—TOTAL COMMITMENT OF GOVERNMENT

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of National Defence. What is the total proposed Canadian government commitment to the Lockheed Corporation?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, there is no commitment other than that we have begun negotiations to lead to a contract under which we shall agree to purchase 18 Lockheed long-range patrol aircraft for \$953 million. We have not entered into a final contract. We are still negotiating the final terms of the contract.

Mr. Paproski: Is that the total commitment? I notice that the minister nods his head, as if to say yes.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED BY MINISTER AT MEETING WITH PROVINCIAL MINISTERS—DETAILS OF NEW DAIRY POLICY

Mr. Yves Caron (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture.

After his meeting this morning with his provincial counterparts, would the minister tell the House which questions have been discussed? Has there been an agreement concerning the dairy policy for 1976-77? If so, when will the minister announce this new policy? Moreover, will the minister take into account the recommendations made by the Quebec members, and will this policy be equitable for all Quebec industrial milk producers?

[English]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, meetings with officials of my department are continuing. Every aspect of industrial milk production in Canada has been discussed. According to law, a policy must be announced or a statement made by April 1. All representations are being considered. At present we are in a difficult position, as there is a surplus not only in Canada but throughout the world.

SUGGESTED USE OF SURPLUS DAIRY PRODUCTS IN EXTERNAL AID PROGRAMS

Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture concerns the same subject. We need to turn milk deficits into cash and foreign charities into trade. Will the minister examine, for policy purposes, the sale of surplus Canadian dairy products to CIDA at cost price, under our present subsidy system, and consider distributing those products at the same prices, as carried on our books, to needy countries now receiving cash by way of CIDA charitable donations?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

REDUCTION IN BUTTERFAT QUOTA FOR PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND—REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture? Has he received the interim report of the Prince Edward Island legislature's committee on agriculture, which was unanimously adopted by the legislature and forwarded to him, and which deplors the fact that the Prince Edward Island quota for butterfat has been reduced from 6.7 million pounds to 4.8 million pounds, a reduction of 28 per cent? It asks the minister and the Dairy Commission if an additional, upward adjustment can be made to the much reduced quota for Prince Edward Island.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the premier of Prince Edward Island met with me last night to discuss this matter. The very important document alluded to was delivered by hand from the legislature of Prince Edward Island. We discussed the matter. I point out that the Dairy Commission and the supply management committee set quotas for each province, not the Minister of Agriculture. They agree on what the quota should be for the whole country. They are discussing this and will discuss it further, because they realize the difficult position of Prince Edward Island producers, who are isolated and cannot produce other commodities. Other parts of Canada are in the same position. It is not easy to decide whose quota shall be cut, and by how much.

Mr. MacLean: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Was the minister able to give encouragement to the premier of Prince Edward Island who must have made representations to show the special case of Prince Edward Island, where only about 10 per cent of provincial production is used as fluid milk; therefore, the quota proposal will have a much greater impact on the industry of the province than it will in other cases. Bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, that the Maritime provinces are only about 40 per cent self-sufficient in the production of dairy products.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, provincial ministers of agriculture, including the minister of Prince Edward Island, have made these representations to me. Of course, other ministers of agriculture feel the same toward producers in their provinces. They are all concerned about how much quotas will be cut, for whom, and who will be affected. It is safe to say that not many ministers of agriculture want to cut the production of their own dairy producers. It is unrealistic to say that we should not cut production; because, if we do not cut production, we shall be wasteful.

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THE MINISTRY

PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF CASE AGAINST STATION CFCF MONTREAL BY SOLICITOR GENERAL—VIEW OF PRIME MINISTER AS TO PROPRIETY

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. This morning on radio station CJOB, Winnipeg, the Solicitor General openly and freely