

*Inquiries of the Ministry***POTATOES**

DROP IN PRICE IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner (Minister of Agriculture): On Thursday last the hon. member for Melfort (Mr. Wright) asked the following question on the orders of the day:

Has the minister received any complaints with regard to the serious drop in the price of potatoes in Prince Edward Island, and that United States potatoes from Maine are being dumped on the Montreal market? Can the minister indicate whether the government is taking any action in the matter?

In reply I may say that no representations have been received to the effect that there has been a serious drop in the price of potatoes in Prince Edward Island, excepting by telephone from the hon. member for Prince (Mr. MacNaught). Stocks of potatoes in storage in Canada on February 1, 1953, indicate an increase of 26 per cent as compared with the light holdings of a year ago, but are still 17 per cent below the past five-year average holdings at that date.

Potato prices at the beginning of the 1952-53 season were higher than usual, but as it became apparent that the crop would be somewhat larger than at first anticipated, prices declined.

I am informed that the Prince Edward Island potato marketing board established a floor price of \$1.90 per 75 pounds on November 29, 1952, but subsequently revised it downward on January 21 to \$1.55-\$1.60, and to \$1.30-\$1.35 on February 14 last.

I am also advised that United States potatoes from Maine are not being dumped on the Montreal market. One carload of Maine potatoes arrived in Montreal early this week and as of yesterday the shipment was still on track unsold. There have been no other importations of Maine potatoes this season.

KOREA

ALLEGED SHOOTING OF REFUGEES BY CANADIAN TROOPS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. R. Pearkes (Nanaimo): I should like to ask a question of the Minister of Justice, notice of which has been given. Has the minister been informed of charges alleged to have been made by Mrs. Kay Gardner at a Victoria peace council meeting that Canadian troops in Korea have been ordered to shoot refugees? If so, has the minister taken any action or can any action be taken to stop such slanderous statements being made?

[Mr. Abbott.]

Hon. Stuart S. Garson (Minister of Justice): In British Columbia the Royal Canadian Mounted Police act for both the federal government and the provincial government. They are taking up this matter with the attorney general's department of the provincial government of British Columbia.

Mr. T. H. Goode (Burnaby-Richmond): May I ask a supplementary question. Is Mrs. Kay Gardner a known communist and member of the communist party in Canada?

Mr. Garson: I have no information as to this.

DOUKHOBORS

REQUEST FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO DEAL WITH SONS OF FREEDOM

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): In view of the general concern in the Kootenays with the Sons of Freedom problem, and in view of a recent Canadian Pacific Railway order abolishing the 21.00 to 3.00 curfew on certain sections of the Kettle Valley railway, I should like to ask the Minister of Justice this question. Has the federal government received any request from the government of British Columbia for assistance generally in dealing with the Sons of Freedom problem or in particular for assistance or co-operation in providing protection for the operating personnel on certain sections of the Kettle Valley railway? If so, what action has been taken?

Hon. Stuart S. Garson (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for having given me notice of his question. In reply may I say that in the latter part of January the attorney general of British Columbia wired to me asking for 20 additional constables to be made available immediately under the terms of our police contract with that province for the purpose of undertaking special duties with regard to the Doukhobor problem. That request has been complied with.

EMERGENCY POWERS ACT

PROVISION FOR CONTINUATION OF ACT FROM MAY 31, 1953 TO MAY 31, 1954

The house resumed, from Thursday, February 19, consideration in committee of the following resolution—Mr. St. Laurent—Mr. Beaudoin in the chair:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Emergency Powers Act to provide for the continuation of the act for a further period of one year, that is from the thirty-first day of May, 1953, to the thirty-first day of May, 1954.