

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, incomes obviously increase because of inflation, but I expect to table the estimates for the fiscal year 1975-76 before the House on Wednesday. The hon. member will then realize that expenses increase accordingly as well.

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[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

INQUIRY WHETHER AIRLINE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS GOVERNED BY CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. I wonder how he will respond to the request by airline flight attendants that the Canadian Labour Code continue to govern their employment arrangements with Canadian airlines, and that they are entitled to the same rights as any other females in the labour force.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I met with the airline flight attendants the day before yesterday. I believe my colleague, the Minister of Transport, met with them also. We are endeavouring to arrive at a solution which will be to the satisfaction of the attendants. Our position is that the code should govern, but there are other factors which the Department of Transport are putting forward with respect to the safety aspects.

Mr. Fairweather: Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister's view will prevail, because on the basis of the information I have, the view of the transport officials on the pregnancy of flight attendants has about as much reality in 1975 as the horse and buggy.

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AGRICULTURE

REQUEST THAT ALL COMMERCIAL IMPORTED CATTLE BE SUBJECT TO QUOTA REQUIREMENTS

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Agriculture. I should like to welcome him back from Mexico. In view of the continued very heavy United States imports of fat cattle under 700 pounds which are not subject to Canadian quota—over 7,000 heads of these cattle entered Canada in the last quarter of 1974—and in view of the statement the minister made last Saturday in Edmonton to the Western Stock-growers Association that these imports represent an unnatural trading pattern, suggesting, by implication at least, that no action is being planned to plug this legal loophole which has helped to further depress our feed cattle markets, has the minister given consideration to requiring that all commercial imported cattle be subject to Canadian quota requirements?

● (1250)

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I want to say in respect of the trip to Mexico to which the hon. gentleman referred, that I left on Monday,

[Mr. Huntington.]

travelling one day there, and came back yesterday; so I was there two days on government business. I can say that some of my discussions will prove to be successful in helping Canadian cattle producers, especially those in western Canada. Regarding the importation of cattle under 700 pounds, they do not come within the average quota from the United States and that is not the normal trading pattern. I intimated that I felt very strongly that this was not the normal trading pattern. We are making representations and reviewing the whole program at the present time. I hope to be making some suggestions and taking some action very shortly in this respect, as we do not like what is happening.

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN CANADA AND UNITED STATES RESPECTING LIVESTOCK PROBLEMS

Mr. G. H. Whittaker (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Will he inform the House whether he and his colleagues, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, have resumed negotiations with the U.S. government in respect of recent livestock problems that border on a near trade war, and will these negotiations include a personal exchange between the minister and Secretary Butz?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I can say that while I was in Mexico I did talk to one of the undersecretaries, Mr. Long, who deals directly with these problems. I am not saying I made any gains at all, but our officials were discussing this matter with U.S. officials as late as two weeks ago. I do not know whether any discussions took place in the past week, but there is certainly no trade war at all. There are more restrictions placed on our trade with the United States that we would like to discuss, but there is no trade war at the present time, as far as I am concerned.

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FOOD PRICES

CO-OPERATION OF GOVERNMENT WITH FOOD PRICES REVIEW BOARD IN FOOD POLICY STUDY

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Agriculture aware of the fact that the Food Prices Review Board is currently undertaking a study in respect of a food policy for Canada? Bearing in mind that today is Valentine's Day, will the minister assure the House that he and his department are prepared to co-operate with Mrs. Plumptre to the fullest extent on this very important subject?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, regarding the review the hon. member mentions, the Prime Minister announced that we were going to develop a food policy for Canada. As I have stated, our officials have always worked in very close co-operation with the Food Prices Review Board, and any help we can give them we will give. We are working on a food policy; I can assure the hon. member of that.