

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Olson: Well, there was a significant improvement in that market during the latter days of August and we were hopeful, as I am sure the producers were too, that the situation would correct itself. It is apparent now that it has not. The hon. member used the word "dump". If any potatoes are being dumped in British Columbia there is immediate action we can take.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar on the last supplementary question on this subject.

COMMODITY STUDY OF EFFECT OF UNITED STATES
IMPORT SURTAX—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): In view of the statement to the House by the Minister of Agriculture that the effect of the surcharge on agriculture would be handled commodity by commodity, is there under way a study commodity by commodity of how the surcharge is affecting Canadian agricultural production, and may we be advised very soon in the House of what the policy will be and how these specific instances will be taken care of?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Yes to the first part of the question, and as soon as possible to the second part.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

UNEMPLOYMENT—EXPECTED LEVEL THIS WINTER

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): My question is for the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that he is reported as having said last night on "Encounter" that unemployment should be lower this year, does the Prime Minister expect unemployment this winter to fall below 6 per cent and, if so, what steps is he taking to achieve that?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I would be able to give a specific statistic. In the program last night I was talking about trends. I repeat what I said: I think it will be lower. As to the specific steps, I have nothing to announce for the time being.

Mr. McGrath: Can the Prime Minister tell the House on what he bases his prediction that unemployment will be lower this winter? Also, what in the view of the government would be a tolerable level of unemployment this winter? Would it be 6 per cent, 5 per cent?

Mr. Trudeau: In answer to the first part of the question, I based it on the general economic indicators—the rate of growth of the gross national product in the first half of the year, the number of housing starts in the first half of the year, which was the greatest ever in our history, the fall of inventories, the increase in consumer demand. I did not go into every detailed indicator, but I used the broad ones which showed that the trend was in that direction. I am sure the hon. member on the backbenches would say that his waistline has not gone down, and probably this is an indicator in a certain direction.

• (11:30 a.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair, of course, will recognize the hon. member for a supplementary but I hope that very soon we will provide an opportunity to other hon. members so they may ask different questions.

Mr. McGrath: I rise really to remind the Prime Minister that he did not reply to the second part of my question. What does the government consider to be a tolerable level of unemployment for the country this winter?

Mr. Trudeau: Slightly better than the opposition would be able to manage.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Again I suggest that we should try to give other hon. members an opportunity to ask their questions and return to this matter later.

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SENIOR CITIZENS

CONSIDERATION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR AGED
PROGRAM

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Can he indicate whether he, the government, or any of its ministers are giving consideration to the feasibility of initiating what might be called an opportunities for aged program?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think those words can mean many things. We are considering programs which will help all age groups in the economy.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

UNEMPLOYMENT—ADVANCING OF EFFECTIVE DATE OF
CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
ACT TO ASSIST JOBLESS

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact the Prime Minister indicated last night that those who would be unemployed—there is no question about the gravity of the situation—could resort to unemployment insurance, and in light of the fact that under the new legislation one million odd will not be able to take advantage of the Unemployment Insurance Act until January 1, 1972, is the government going to bring in an amendment covering these people so that they will be able to take advantage of the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act earlier than January 1, 1972?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker.