

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

I see Your Honour is anxiously looking at me, but I would invite you to take a rest since I did not commence so soon as the previous speaker. However, I promise I will end my remarks almost immediately. I therefore ask the government to consider measures to remedy the instability of Canadian agricultural markets. Apple concentrates are being imported from Europe. The Department of Agriculture is making a study of the situation, but this has not been completed. Let us give an optimistic report to those engaged in the agricultural industry of British Columbia.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Lessard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I see that my hon. colleague for Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney) would have liked to reply to the hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Rose), because I think that, coming from that part of the country, he might have been in a position to specify certain points. But since the hon. member has said at the beginning of his remarks that if every Canadian—and I think he was right—ate one apple a day, the services of those among our good colleagues who are doctors would perhaps not be required. On this, I perfectly agree with the hon. member, because this would mean an average annual consumption of 8 billion apples.

• (10:20 p.m.)

[*English*]

The hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Rose) has raised the question of assistance to agricultural producer groups and others on unprocessed agricultural products, similar to the assistance provided under the employment support bill. Members will appreciate that handlers of processed agricultural products, like others, have available to them the provisions of the employment support bill.

As the minister announced in this House last week, similar assistance will be available in respect of unprocessed agricultural products under the provisions of the Agricultural Stabilization Act. The Agricultural Stabilization Board has been authorized to develop programs on a commodity-by-commodity basis and the minister has solicited applications from producer and agricultural products distributor groups for assistance under the program.

The hon. member has raised the question of the apple industry. Departmental officials have met with officers of the Horticultural Council and plans are under way for a wider meeting with apple industry representatives to consider possible programs that will mitigate the effect of the surtax. I should also add that apples represent one of the items in respect of which the United States has announced that the tariff would be reduced to zero on January 1, 1972. If the planned Kennedy round reduction proceeds, the surtax should also be removed at that time since, the surtax is not designed to apply to items for which there is no tariff.

NATURAL RESOURCES—OFFSHORE MINERAL RIGHTS—  
FEDERAL POSITION RESPECTING SABLE ISLAND

**Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to disappoint the parliamentary secretary by saying I hope he does not talk about apples,

because I shall be talking about oil, a commodity a little closer to his soul. I am talking about the essential rights of Nova Scotians. I am very much aware that the question of jurisdiction over Sable Island and its offshore mineral rights are inseparable. I do not seek to debate the whole situation but only the first aspect of the question dealing with the jurisdiction of Sable Island.

The Prime Minister's decision not to discuss the rights of the province of Nova Scotia to the territory of Sable Island, I suggest to the parliamentary secretary and to the House, is obviously a political one, made in a political context as the result of a recent Supreme Court decision. But I feel strongly that the people of Nova Scotia have a right to be heard in this House and by the government on the question of jurisdiction. On that basis alone a political decision has been taken by this government.

The Supreme Court decision of 1967, based on an historical analysis of offshore rights, which ruled that British Columbia should have control only of the lands with which it entered confederation, makes a good case for the federal government concerning mineral rights off the shores of Nova Scotia. That is not disputed in any arguments we are raising. Indeed, one knows very well that if the controversy again comes before the Supreme Court, that court must be guided by the precedent which has been established.

However, it is a rather narrow attitude to apply this legal precedent directly without listening to the special case of Sable Island and the people of Nova Scotia. It is true that the BNA Act lists Sable Island as property of the federal government in connection with lighthouses, piers and beacons—but only in that connection. Could the BNA Act provision be construed in the sense that the federal government owns only Sable Island's lighthouses, piers, and so on, and not the land itself? On the other hand, if it is the case that all of Sable Island is under federal authority, why did this authority not form a council to administer the island, as is the case in the Northwest Territories, rather than leave it to work things out for itself? I suggest to the parliamentary secretary that he not take that suggestion too lightly, although I do not expect him to deal with it tonight.

Furthermore, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick entered confederation under the terms that they would each maintain their boundary limits. I think this is clear. I believe that jurisdictionally it takes precedence over the other subsection, and this is a point of argument which will be raised. So far as Nova Scotia is concerned, this includes Sable Island. Indeed, by the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, Sable Island was ceded to Acadia, a territory which includes present-day Nova Scotia.

Prior to confederation there was no doubt that the province of Nova Scotia owned Sable Island, and there should be no doubt today—at least, no political doubt. The province has recognized the rights of the inhabitants of Sable Island by allowing them to vote, for example in the provincial election of just about a year ago, as constituents of a county of the province in which I happen to live. Although I am not absolutely certain, I believe there was an opportunity for the people working on the island to vote by way of proxy as long ago as five years.