

Oral Questions

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

MILK PRODUCTS—SUPPLIES VIS-À-VIS NEEDS—POSSIBLE AMENDMENT OF DAIRY POLICY

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Minister of Agriculture.

In view of the public concern regarding a possible lack of milk products, could the minister inform the House about the present situation in that field? Does the rate of production meet the country's needs right now?

[English]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that production in the month of October showed some improvement, but over the whole of the year the production of milk is down by 5.9 per cent across the nation. That means we shall have to find sources of supply. We have found sources of supply for some of the products we need, mainly butter from New Zealand and other countries. We shall have to import that product. Economic factors are not the only thing keeping people in the dairy business—we know that—but they are important.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, in view of the constant rise in the production cost in this field, can the minister tell us if he will suggest changes in the milk policy and a price increase so as to encourage such production in Canada?

[English]

Mr. Whelan: On Friday, Mr. Speaker, I met the national dairy consultative committee for the nation and discussed this very matter.

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ENERGY

DISCUSSION AND DEBATE OF ENERGY ANALYSIS—REQUEST THAT POLICY STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER BE REFERRED TO NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Mr. Keith Taylor (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of various government statements that the energy analysis tabled last June would provide a basis for public discussion and debate, can the minister tell the House whether, since then, any formal public discussions and debates have been held?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): I wonder where the hon. member has been in the last six months.

Mr. Taylor: Having regard to the fact that the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works has not met for six months, will the minister refer the Prime Minister's statement of last Thursday to that committee for discussion and debate?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Mr. Hees.]

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I would point out to the hon. gentleman that committee discussion took place in the committee on miscellaneous estimates which has focused on this subject.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

● (1500)

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Second, Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works does have an order of reference at the present time. If opposition members had been interested in such a discussion, such a discussion could have been held.

[Later:]

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member for Calgary Centre rising on a point of order?

Mr. Andre: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said that there was no call for the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works to meet. For the benefit of the House may I say that is untrue. I requested the vice-chairman to hold a meeting of the subcommittee of this committee so we could call a meeting, but so far the request has been denied.

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TRANSPORT

SHORTAGE OF BOXCARS FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA LUMBER—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Harry Olausen (Coast Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. As I understand it, the Minister of Transport recently assured the House that Canadian National, the British Columbia Railway and Canadian Pacific ordered railway cars for lumber movement at the beginning of the year. In view of the very critical shortage that now exists in British Columbia, can the minister inform the House what plans he has implemented for the manufacture of boxcars, and what plans the government has for the future?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that I understand the question. Private industry, of course, manufactures boxcars in Canada.

Mr. Olausen: Mr. Speaker, may I direct this question to the Minister of Transport, please?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I have said again and again that we were doing all we could to supply boxcars to the lumber companies of British Columbia. The position of the British Columbia Railway is to rely on the CNR and CPR to have boxcars. They did not order boxcars for years before this present crisis. Last year the industry itself forecast an increase of 6 per cent, when actually the increase is 18 per cent. The lumber companies refused to co-operate with the railways in regard to not keeping cars 40 days but 14 days, which is the average in Canada. If the hon. member can convince