

the particular centres yet to be identified. It would be most unfair and irresponsible at this time to induce panic in the consumer market dealing with this particular product. Poultry and other foods as well must be handled properly, as most consumers have been doing for years. So far, the incidence of disease resulting from contamination has not been unduly serious in this country, but as I said, it is of concern to us.

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AGRICULTURE

BEEF—SUGGESTED RESTRICTION OF FOREIGN IMPORTS AND RENEGOTIATION OF UNITED STATES QUOTAS

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the extremely important and urgent meeting which is to take place tomorrow between the minister and United States Secretary of Agriculture Butz relating to the egg issue and beef and veal quotas, and in view of the present somewhat strained relations between our two countries concerning the trans-shipment, or at least, substitution of Australian carcass beef sent to the United States by way of Canada, will the minister consider supporting the Canadian Cattle-men's view that unless some form of voluntary restraint against foreign imports is instituted, or a Canadian import law enacted, we may not have access to the United States market for our Canadian beef and veal?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure I do nothing to offend the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, because they do not want government interference. I will study their brief. They are continually saying that. Yet, judging by what the hon. member said, it sounds as if they want more government interference. We shall discuss with the secretary of agriculture of the United States tomorrow all aspects of the beef trading program.

● (1430)

Mr. Hargrave: Will the Minister of Agriculture also give consideration to urging Secretary Butz that their import quotas against Canadian beef, which will end December 31 next, should be renegotiated at or near historical trade levels similar to Canada's five year average pattern instead of a 12 month August to August quota?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I met with the United States secretary of agriculture at the FAO conference in Rome where we had a frank discussion. He sent a letter to me around November 15 which I received the other day. We had already made arrangements for a meeting in Washington. He suggested that when we meet in Washington we have a frank discussion on all agricultural problems facing the two nations. We will talk about our trade problems, their tariffs and our tariffs to see whether we can come to a proper trade arrangement that does not hurt one nation or the other.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

ALLEGED SLOWNESS IN IMPLEMENTING POLICY IN NOVA SCOTIA—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address my question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion.

Further to the question put yesterday to the acting minister by the hon. member for York-Sunbury, Mr. Nicholson, the minister who was and is speaking for the Liberal government of Nova Scotia recently expressed great disappointment with the inaction of the minister in Nova Scotia. I realize this lack of action could easily be seen as the responsibility of the predecessor of the present minister, but what is the minister's response to the very important statement made by the Nova Scotia government?

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition, I should like to say that we are no happier than need be ourselves about the delays in the negotiations and the fact that we have been unable to sign a greater number of secondary agreements with the Nova Scotia government. Three agreements are now being implemented; they are very important, one especially, and the amounts of money involved are also quite considerable.

We are still negotiating with the Nova Scotia government with a view to coming up with concrete proposals. We trust we will be in a position to announce concrete proposals within the next few weeks, or months. Still, I should in no way want to blame the provincial government for the delays. One thing is sure, however: before reaching decisions, we should be satisfied with the information requested from the provincial governments, and should make sure that our files are complete and that we are in a position to arrive at a decision which, in the final analysis, will respect the provincial authority while also taking into account the priorities of my department, which is willing to intervene in matters concerning economic and industrial expansion.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be sure that I clearly understand the minister. Is it his contention that the problem is due to a lack of effective co-operation by the government of Nova Scotia?

Mr. Lessard: I would not say, Mr. Speaker, that there is a lack of co-operation but we must recognize that some situations have changed, that the questions under study contained elements which have evolved in the last few months so that the provincial government had to review some of its own priorities. We have been informed of this necessity and the necessary steps are now being taken so that the new priorities of the government of Nova Scotia will be taken into consideration.