

Oral Questions

cattle industry to his reference in the throne speech that a meat import act will be introduced to protect both consumers and producers.

Can the minister inform the House and our Canadian cattle industry whether his intended meat import act contains essentially the same types of provisions as the beef import proposals we had drafted in the Thirty-first Parliament?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. member knows that the one which was drafted in the Thirty-first Parliament was practically the same as the one drafted in the Thirtieth Parliament but was never presented to Parliament. I can say that it will be essentially the same. There may be a few modifications which I think will make it even better, because I am sure the hon. member felt that his party made a few modifications in the Thirty-first Parliament which made the proposals better, as we did in the Thirtieth Parliament.

Mr. Hargrave: As the minister himself admitted, of course, his proposals never got to the floor of the House of Commons. I should like to ask the minister whether he can indicate what other meat commodities, if any, he is proposing to include in his meat import act, and when can we expect this very important legislation?

Mr. Whelan: At the present time, Madam Speaker, we have to look at all the rules of GATT and we have to abide by them with our trading partners. That may have some effect on whether we can add any other products to the act. But I would say we should be able to bring the legislation to Parliament soon.

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BROADCASTING**MINISTER'S SPEECH ON NEW BROADCASTING SYSTEM**

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications. My question concerns a speech given by him in Calgary yesterday, in which he outlined a novel vision of a new broadcasting system for Canada, the key feature of which is that private broadcasters will be free to concentrate on the lucrative business of airing more cheap U.S. programs dumped into Canada, while the public sector will concentrate on the very expensive business of producing and airing Canadian programs. The reaction to the statement from one private broadcaster, at least, was the following:

It would be in my interest if he did say that . . . but I don't believe that's what he meant.

In view of this, I wonder if the minister would clarify his statement for the benefit of the delighted private broadcasters and the horrified Canadian public.

Hon. Francis Fox (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I think the best sugges-

tion I can make to the hon. member is to take the time and trouble to read my speech, instead of relying on press reports.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rose: Back in office! I should like to tell the minister that I took the time—and it was a great deal of trouble—to read the minister's remarks. In his paper he hinted not only to what I alluded earlier but to the abandonment of the single system, which is a policy retreat of mammoth proportions.

I wonder if I could ask, as a supplementary, what the minister's plans are, or if he has any, for improving and stimulating our creative production industry. Also, when does he intend to let the rest of the country in on these plans, because apparently it is the position right now that Canadian programs are going to be reduced, not enhanced?

Mr. Fox: I think the last part of the hon. member's statement does not take into account the speech I made in Calgary yesterday. The thrust of the speech was that, while people in general have spoken about a single system in Canada, with the technological development one could raise the question as to whether this is still reality, or fiction, at a time when we have satellites in the sky broadcasting directly to people in their homes. It is my intention to promote Canadian content in television.

An hon. Member: How?

Mr. Fox: I think a number of Canadian cultural agencies have been set up and funded over the years by the government which are producing high-quality Canadian content which has not been used sufficiently by public or private broadcasters in this country.

I think in particular of such organizations as the National Film Board, widely acclaimed across the world, which does now produce a number of programs of high quality which I would personally like to see used to a far greater extent on both the public and the private broadcasting systems in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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AGRICULTURE**EXCISE TAX ON DOMESTIC WINES—DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON GRAPE AND WINE INDUSTRY**

Mr. Joe Reid (St. Catharines): My question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Since the Minister of Finance in his mini-budget adopted holus-bolus the provisions of the Crosbie budget relating to the excise tax on tobacco and alcohol, but failed to maintain the traditional difference between distilled spirits and wines, and since this is undoubtedly a regressive tax on wines, resulting in a surplus of grapes, a reduction in sales and more unemployment, will the minister—as did the former minister of finance, following representations made to him by the grape and wine industry—agree to implement a more equitable tax on the wine industry?