

Inquiries of the Ministry

External Affairs expressing concern that if the United States surtax remained in effect for a lengthy period it would result in the export of jobs from Canada to the United States, and in light of the statement by the President of the United States that it would remain in effect for longer than the initial 90 days, is the government considering the establishment of a monitoring agency similar to that suggested to the government by the Standing Committee on External Affairs to ensure that branch plants of United States corporations operating in Canada operate in the best interests of our economy?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have not that particular recommendation in mind, but I can answer generally that the government is considering all manner of possible responses to the United States surtax and other measures if and when they are brought in.

IMPLICATIONS OF ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Prime Minister. Last night the Prime Minister stated that all our economic indicators indicate a significant expansion of the economy. Was the Prime Minister aware of such indicators as the July figures on real domestic production that revealed a 0.3 per cent decline, that manufacturing output off one-tenth of 1 per cent—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is perhaps a statement more than a question.

Mr. Paproski: A supplementary—

Mr. Speaker: I trust it will not be a supplementary statement. The hon. member might indicate if he has a question to ask the Prime Minister.

Mr. Paproski: Mr. Speaker, in light of the Prime Minister's optimism about the economic growth, can he say in just what month his views on "Encounter" were taped?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Joliette.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

ASSISTANCE TO POTATO GROWERS—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture.

I recently told the Minister of Agriculture about the enormous difficulties encountered by potato growers in Quebec as well as throughout the country and I want to ask him if he is now in a position to make a statement ensuring potato growers that they will get help since their products are sold at extremely low prices at the present time?

[English]

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give the details of the program to the House

[Mr. Rowland.]

today, but I can advise the hon. member that some relief for this particular commodity is under active and urgent consideration.

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure whether the question sought by the hon. member for Malpeque is supplementary to the one asked by the hon. member for Joliette. I must say that when I recognized him I was under the impression that he was going to ask a supplementary to the previous line of questioning. Maybe we should now pursue the line of questioning initiated by the hon. member for Joliette. I recognize the hon. member for Malpeque on a supplementary.

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture at an early date make a statement on motions with regard to government policy in an attempt to relieve the unsatisfactory financial situation in which the potato growers and small fruit growers find themselves so that the growers and the provincial governments can be fully aware of the proposed government policy at the earliest possible moment?

Mr. Olson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like to do that. I should advise the hon. member and the House, however, that yesterday afternoon and even this morning we were attempting to arrange a meeting with Mr. MacDonald, the Minister of Agriculture for Prince Edward Island, and Mr. Stairs, the Minister of Agriculture for New Brunswick, to discuss this matter. I think it would not be wise for me to try to make a statement until some time after that meeting.

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: Mr. Speaker, I have another supplementary.

I notice that the Minister of Agriculture seems to have had contacts with two provincial ministers surely concerned with this problem. Will he invite his counterpart from Quebec to the meetings?

[English]

Mr. Olson: I should say that my senior officials have had contacts with some senior officials in Quebec, but I have not had a request from the Minister of Agriculture for Quebec. This has come from the other two provinces earlier this morning and yesterday afternoon.

DUMPING OF POTATOES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—EFFECT ON ALBERTA PRICES

Mr. J. H. Horner (Crowfoot): My supplementary question has to do with the dumping of potatoes in British Columbia, which is having a very depressing effect on the price of potatoes in Alberta. Would the minister also look into that problem?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Yes, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, we have been looking at it for quite a long time. I understand that the situation has deteriorated—

Mr. Horner: The minister should do something more than look.