

Oral Questions

AGRICULTURE

ACTION TO ASSIST BEEF PRODUCERS IN LIGHT OF IMPORTS
SELLING AT BELOW CANADIAN COST OF PRODUCTION

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent-Essex): Mr. Speaker, this is a supplementary question. In the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, because of the importance of the matter I should like to direct the question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that imports of beef into Canada are now at a market price below the actual cost of production on Canadian feedlots, many of which are either closing down or contemplating such action, will the minister indicate whether the government contemplates any action to bring relief to these producers, and what this policy might be?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Of course, Mr. Speaker, we are reviewing the situation as we have done ever since the market was rendered unstable by the American lifting of controls. We have the matter under constant review.

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INDUSTRY

RADIO ENGINEERING PRODUCTS COMPANY LIMITED—
INQUIRY AS TO SALE AND RECOVERY OF INDEBTEDNESS TO
CROWN

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce concerning Radio Engineering Products Company Limited, a company situated in New Brunswick which the government found necessary to take over in order to protect itself in relation to loans to the company and an indebtedness of \$4.5 million. Has this company been sold and, if not, are steps being taken to sell it? What steps are being taken to collect the \$4.5 million indebtedness to the Crown?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, the government acquired a majority of the shares of Radio Engineering Products Company Limited with the object of retaining significant technological skills in Canada, to provide continuing employment in northern New Brunswick, and to improve and stabilize the financial position of the company in order that it might be resold as a continuing business operation. The company has recently gone through a difficult period, largely the result of the level of business. Recently some useful headway has been made in diversifying the company's operations, and significant progress has been made in negotiating contracts for future production. I am hopeful that this process will continue.

● (1200)

Mr. Hales: The minister did not answer my question as to what steps have been taken to collect the indebtedness of \$4.5 million.

Mr. Gillespie: As I have indicated, Mr. Speaker, the resources of the company are modest. An effort has been made to sustain the company and to put it in a fully competitive position.

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

FAILURE TO FLY FLAG OF FREE UKRAINE AT OTTAWA CITY
HALL—POLICY OF DEPARTMENT

Mr. Joe Hueglin (Niagara Falls): Mr. Speaker, may I address my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. On January 22, contrary to the custom of recent years, the flag of the Free Ukraine was not flown at Ottawa City Hall. As this break with custom was based on the initiative and advice of the minister's department, is it to be considered that this unfortunate precedent will be applied to the flags of all peoples whose homelands are now included within the Soviet Union—the Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians as well as the Ukrainians?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman may know, there is no law in Canada about the flying of flags. When the Department of External Affairs is asked for its advice, as it sometimes is, it cannot, of course, endorse the flying of any flags other than those of governments which are recognized by Canada. That is the only advice we can give. But it is only advice. People can do as they wish since there is no law on the subject. One has to make a distinction, of course, between countries. For example, Canada does not recognize the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union, which is quite different from the position of some of the other countries to which the hon. member is referring.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Niagara Falls will be recognized for a supplementary, after which the Chair will call orders of the day.

Mr. Hueglin: It is, then, very clear that the minister's department was approached by the mayor rather than the other way round?

Mr. Sharp: Yes, that is my understanding. We do not look around and say that a certain flag should not be flown. If we are asked for our advice we must give it, of course, in terms of our relationships with other countries. I would hope, too, that when municipalities decide what they are going to do they will observe the ordinary international courtesies.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day. The hon. member for Scarborough West is rising on a point of order.

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BILINGUALISM

STATEMENT IN GLOBE AND MAIL ON COST—REQUEST FOR
CORRECTION

Mr. John Harney (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order or a point of privilege which Your Honour might consider procedurally inappropriate but which nevertheless is extremely important in substance to this House and to the country. In the *Globe and Mail* this morning there is a news article on the front page which states in its body and in its headline that we, the parliament of Canada, are about to spend \$8.56 of every \$100 on bilingualism.