

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the answer is really the same as it has been. We are discussing these reports with the provincial governments, particularly in the west, as well as with the companies on whom we have relied for a good deal of the calculations which are involved. At an appropriate time as these discussions proceed it is our intention to make the summary or the basic findings involved available to producers so that the discussions can proceed. I assure hon. members that it continues to be our intention to proceed only in line with producer wishes with regard to changes that may be made.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question would have been for the Prime Minister as it involves several government departments and could in part touch on his newly acquired training as a parent. I realize that the Acting Prime Minister lacks in that direction, but I will try my luck with him anyway. As a member of the cabinet is now advertising for an English nanny in the agony column of the *Times* of London, would the Acting Prime Minister cause vigorous efforts to be made to see if some fine, unemployed, Canadian, potential "Mary Poppins" could get a special manpower training course to fill this need?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Broadbent: A supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: I think the supplementary might better be placed on the order paper.

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AGRICULTURE

POTATOES—RESPONSE TO REPRESENTATIONS FOR ACTION TO RELIEVE DEPRESSED MARKET—POSSIBLE DIVERSION TO STOCK FEED

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby wants to volunteer I do not want to interrupt him. My question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. I am very happy in this case that he is a Maritimer because my question is of importance to the Maritimes. A telegram was recently sent to the Minister of Agriculture, who unfortunately has not been in the House this week, with regard to the Agricultural Stabilization Board taking substantial stocks of potatoes previously committed by both Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick farmers. The joint potato committee of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick has asked the Minister of Agriculture to take immediate action in order to alleviate the depression that is currently affecting the potato market in eastern Canada. I would ask the minister to ascertain whether some action can be taken quickly on this particular problem.

[Mr. Skoberg.]

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to bring my hon. friend's question to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture as soon as possible. While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, may I be permitted to answer a question that was asked of the Prime Minister a day or two ago?

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I might allow the hon. member for Egmont a supplementary question and then the President of the Privy Council can refer to the question he has just mentioned.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): I am grateful for the assurance of concern by the Acting Prime Minister and his willingness to act. Inasmuch as a number of carloads of potatoes in New Brunswick have been diverted to starch manufacturing and no such capability exists in Prince Edward Island, and in view of the active request of Prince Edward Island potato growers to have these potatoes diverted to stock feed, would the minister see whether the exploration of this possibility by agricultural officials can be accelerated? I think that is the essence of the matter, at least in terms of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. MacEachen: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I will also add that query to the matter I will raise with the Minister of Agriculture.

[Later:]

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, could the minister also make sure, because of the pressure of time, that a direct answer is given to these questions I have raised either by the Minister of Agriculture or by himself when the House reconvenes on Monday?

Mr. MacEachen: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We shall perhaps have to limit the number of supplementaries. I believe the President of the Privy Council has replied in the affirmative to the hon. member for Egmont.

[Translation]

POTATOES—REQUEST BY PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AND NEW BRUNSWICK FOR ASSISTANCE

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question on this subject to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture.

Has the Agricultural Stabilization Board studied the request addressed to it by telegram this week by the joint committee of potato growers of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island?

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member the telegram was indeed received and studied. With regard to the first part, hon. members will be happy to hear that as far as reporting what quantities of potatoes are held in stock in Canada, in the future a distinction will be made between the quantity on the market and that which is held under the federal government assistance program.