

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I am not sure from the Hon. Member's question whether he is talking about the Government of Manitoba or the Government of British Columbia.

**Mr. Riis:** Manitoba.

**Mr. Roberts:** He is talking about the Government of Manitoba. I would like to assure him that our programs show no particular discrimination against the Government of Manitoba, or indeed against Manitobans. I do not have the figures with me, but a couple of months ago, when the matter was very much under discussion in this House, we reviewed the over-all percentage of allocations and compared them with the levels of unemployment that existed over the past year. We found that when looking at all of the job-creation programs of the Government of Canada, the over-all percentage of allocations roughly reflected the percentage of unemployment, with some discrepancies which I think can be accounted for by the fact that some provincial Governments have more resources with which to tackle unemployment within their own provinces than others. In effect, there was a parallel allocation which pretty well reflected the unemployment percentage levels. If I can find the information easily, I will bring the figures up to date and forward them to the Hon. Member.

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**AGRICULTURE****SUGGESTED ESTABLISHMENT OF TOBACCO NATIONAL MARKETING AGENCY**

**Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister will recall that yesterday over 1,400 tobacco growers came to Ottawa to make an urgent representation to the Minister for an amendment to the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act which would permit the establishment of a national marketing agency for tobacco. The Minister will also recall that my colleagues, the Hon. Member for Elgin and the Hon. Member for Haldimand-Norfolk, have likewise pressed the Minister, as have some of his own colleagues.

Back in May the Minister promised us that we would see such an amendment introduced in the House in the first part of June. Could the Minister tell us why he has reneged in honouring his commitment? Does he plan to bring this amendment to the House for first reading in the immediate future?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has made some statements about the tobacco growers who want an amendment to the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act. As we see it at the present time the Act is discriminatory because it gives some farmers the rights to supply and management, particularly poultry farmers, and does not give farmers producing other products the same rights.

I would not be in favour of bringing the Bill before the House simply for the benefit of the tobacco growers, and I

have made that clear in all instances. The Act should be open and non-discriminatory for all farmers of all products. Farmers are not forced into using the provisions of that Act. They use the democratic action of deciding for themselves if they wish to fall under that kind of plan. If I can get the unanimous consent of the House that the plan could be that broad kind of a plan, I am pretty sure that we could bring the amendment to the House very quickly, particularly if we had the agreement of all Parties to pass it.

**Mr. Halliday:** Mr. Speaker, our House Leader is very anxious to see that amendment. We are anxiously awaiting its introduction.

**POSITION OF MINISTER OF CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I wonder if the Minister could tell us whether or not it is true that she is being subjected to very heavy lobbying against this amendment to the Farm Products Marketing Agencies Act and that this is the reason it is being held up in Cabinet.

**Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** No, Mr. Speaker.

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● (1500)

**CORPORATE AFFAIRS****PETRO-CANADA—TREATMENT OF INDEPENDENT GASOLINE DEALER**

**Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Recently Petro-Canada informed an independent gasoline dealer in my riding that he no longer qualified for a minimum margin should the price of gasoline fall below a predetermined level as a result of gas wars. However, the outlets which deal directly with PetroCan and have the PetroCan signs are entitled to a minimum spread of two cents per litre. Therefore my question to the Minister is this: what will she do about this unfair practice which could drive this dealer out of business?

**Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with the case, but I can assure the Hon. Member that if he were to provide me with the details I would direct my officials to look into the matter.

**Mr. Fretz:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the reply of the Minister. Indeed, I will favour her with that information.