

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

figures of imports he specifically mentioned the dates from March 1 to March 8, and gave the number of pounds of imports that came into this country.

• (10:10 p.m.)

Further, Mr. Speaker, he made quite sure that his figures and remarks were directed to the North American market; in other words, the import that he was referring to was from the United States. The entire basis of the interest, so far as this industry is concerned, is that for about the fifth or sixth continuous week farmers had received exceptionally high prices for the carcasses of hogs they were taking to market, and the minister was very fair in giving these prices at the high of February, and then mentioning the drop which occurred last week. The significant factor is that he mentioned nothing about imports last week. I was informed there were imports by a processor from a European country either close to or exceeding two million pounds of the product, and that this directly is the reason there was such a drop in the market.

It is easy to understand how a situation could arise where processors could band together and import a product of this kind for a given number of days, because it is a continuing type of market and the prices would decline because Canadian producers would be suffering from the amount of the imported product which would be used in the packing plants, and there would be no demand for their own product.

As background for the question in respect of the importation, I would like to state that it is granted that the price of carcasses dropped on the United States as well as the Canadian markets, but there is a differential of almost 100 per cent. Therefore it follows that it may be that the statement of this official is factual. In my question to the ministry I made it very clear that I had no argument if the parliamentary secretary would give me the answer.

To be absolutely fair to the house and to the parliamentary secretary, I think I should put into the record the note which I forwarded to the minister's office following the question period this afternoon. It is addressed to the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Wint-ers). I informed him this afternoon that I had a question for him on the adjournment debate. I stated that the question involved imports of pork or pork products from Europe in the period from March 7 to March 18,

[Mr. Winkler.]

and asked that if there were such imports, to what companies were they made and did they have an import licence accordingly.

When I asked the Minister of Agriculture today, he answered me by referring only to the North American market. In this regard, my question to him is in respect of the claim by the Federation of Agriculture that the import in the time referred to was basically the cause of the tremendous drop in the return to farmers in this particular industry which occurred last week. I would say that the drop which occurred was very sharp. If markets in this regard can be manipulated to this extent, I believe the government should take action. I will appreciate the answer to my question.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Charles Cantin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, pork and pork products are not included in the import control list. Therefore, no licence is required in order to import those products from Europe.

Finally, for the period in question, the department does not yet have the information regarding the importation of those products.

[English]

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY—NEWFOUNDLAND—
INVESTIGATION INTO FOOD AND
DRUG PRICES

Mr. Max Salisman (Waterloo South): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I directed a question to the Prime Minister in reference to a news item which appeared in the *Financial Post* of March 19. The item is reported from St. John's, Newfoundland, and indicates that a royal commission has been appointed by the provincial government to investigate food and drug prices in Newfoundland.

I think the action of the Newfoundland government in establishing this royal commission to look into food and drug prices is of the utmost importance, especially in the light of the debate that is taking place in this house regarding the high cost of living in Canada. This is an enormous and bold step forward which is much needed.

When I directed my question to the Prime Minister I asked him whether he and his government intended to support the royal commission set up in the province of Newfoundland, and what assistance he might render in their behalf. Unfortunately the Prime Minister did not feel that he could answer my question, and suggested that it be placed on the order paper.