

mara stating what is a fact when he said that to-day Canada faces its most acute man-power shortage?

Mr. MITCHELL: I think that is generally understood. Most grown-up men know that.

FRESH FRUIT

PRICE CEILING ON BRITISH COLUMBIA STRAWBERRIES AND RASPBERRIES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. A. CRUICKSHANK (Fraser Valley): I desire to ask a question of the Minister of Finance on a matter which affects fruit growers not only in my riding but in the entire province of British Columbia. I directed a question to the minister some three weeks ago, and again on the 24th of this month, in connection with the picking and disposal of strawberries and raspberries—particularly, at that time, strawberries. Under the present price set-up as established by the board it is impossible for the berry growers to arrange for the picking and salvaging of the crop. I would ask the minister, in view of the seriousness of the situation, and the fact that, with a seasonal crop like this, an immediate or a very early decision is necessary, and the price set by the board makes it uneconomic to pick the crop: First, what provision is being made to have the crop picked and so avoid waste, and, second, will the government give immediate consideration to modifying the administrator's order No. A-1224? The matter is of urgent importance to us in British Columbia?

Mr. D. C. ABBOTT (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance): Perhaps I might answer that question. Ceiling prices for strawberries were fixed, as my hon. friend has indicated, by administrative order No. A-1224, which was published, I think, on Monday of this week. I understand from my hon. friend that in zone 3, which includes British Columbia, the price is alleged to be not sufficient to cover the cost of production. My hon. friend has asked what the government proposes to do about that: is that correct?

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: Correct.

Mr. ABBOTT: I received notice of his question a few minutes before coming into the house. I got in touch with the administrator of fruits and was informed that last year, when no ceiling prevailed, the price was higher than the price which has been fixed this year. The price fixed this year is ninety per cent higher than the average for the

years 1938, 1939, 1940 and 1941, and it is felt that it is sufficient to provide an adequate return. That is the only answer I can give to my hon. friend's question, but I shall be glad to bring his further representations to the attention of those concerned.

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: I would point out that it is of vital importance that we should know when this decision will be given.

Mr. ABBOTT: My information is that one of the leading grower organizations of British Columbia was written to to-day in reply to certain representations which had been made setting forth in substance what I have said here, that the ceiling price set is felt to be adequate, and there is no indication at the moment that the price will be changed.

EXCISE ACT

PROSECUTIONS IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND— ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON MAY 25

On the orders of the day:

Hon. R. B. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on a question of privilege, I adverted to the fact that, with respect to questions 9, 10 and 11, which I had on the order paper on May 16, the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Gibson), answered only four questions in a series of twelve, leaving eight unanswered, with the notation that it is not considered to be in the public interest to answer these questions at the present time for the reason that the case is still before the courts. That, by some stretch of the imagination, might be applicable to questions 8 and 9, but I do submit that I am entitled to answers to questions 5, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 12. I want to know what counsel fees have been paid to date in relation to these cases; what witness fees have been paid to date; what other costs have been paid. Then I do want to know whether the attorney general was requested to prosecute these cases and whether he acted, and has there been more than one trial of these cases and, if so, how many. Then finally and vitally, why were the proceedings taken by way of indictment instead of by summary conviction under the appropriate part of the criminal code. I am entitled to answers to these questions.

Hon. C. W. G. GIBSON (Minister of National Revenue): When the hon. member was speaking on this matter yesterday I did not notice that he said:

I am entitled to have that information notwithstanding that the case may be under appeal.

I would point out that these cases are not under appeal. The cases came on for trial