

*Inquiries of the Ministry***TRADE****IMPORTATION OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES
FROM CUBA**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. George H. Hees (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. member for Fort William drew my attention to an article in the *Globe and Mail* concerning the importation of Cuban tomatoes into Canada and asked this question:

Can the minister inform the house in what form the Cuban deal has been subsidized by the Canadian government?

In reply I wish to state there is no Canadian government subsidy involved in the importation of tomatoes or any other products from Cuba.

**RED CHINA—INQUIRY AS TO NEGOTIATIONS
FOR SALE OF WHEAT**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the reported important success of the Australian wheat board in selling 300,000 tons of wheat to China and the report that further sales of Australian wheat are being negotiated, can the minister say what efforts are being made by the Canadian wheat board and the Department of Trade and Commerce to sell Canadian wheat to China at this time?

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Minister of Agriculture): As the hon. member has been told in the house twice already, discussions between the Canadian wheat board and the China Resources Company are going on at the present time, and it would not be in the public interest to divulge any of these discussions until an announcement can be made. All I will say is that we shall not have to hold a candle to anyone when the discussions are over.

POWER**COLUMBIA RIVER—REQUEST FOR DATE OF
MEETING WITH PREMIER BENNETT**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate): I should like to ask the Minister of Finance whether he has yet arranged his visit to Victoria to discuss the Columbia project with the premier of British Columbia, which he announced to the press on January 6, I think it was.

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Arrangements have not been made in a precise sense for the visit, but I hope it may be possible to arrange it relatively

soon, Mr. Speaker. The federal government attaches very great importance, as hon. members are aware, to the development of the Columbia river, and has done all that lies within its power to assist and expedite the undertaking of the project. This still remains the very firm and urgent desire of the federal government.

So far as the proposed meeting with Premier Bennett is concerned, the premier indicated that it would not be convenient for him to come to Ottawa as he was busy with his plans for the session and his plans for his own budget. It was evidently thought I had nothing much to occupy my time in this respect, and it was suggested that I should go to Victoria. A visit to Victoria is always a very pleasant experience, and I am looking forward to that experience soon if the house will excuse me for the time necessary.

Mr. Pickersgill: May I ask the minister a supplementary question. If the minister succeeds in finding the premier of British Columbia when he gets there, does he intend to sweeten the offer he made in his letter?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I am sure there will be no difficulty about finding the premier. He has indicated that he hopes the meeting will take place in Victoria. So far as the second part of the hon. member's question is concerned, I cannot imagine the offer would need any more sweetening. It is such a good, generous offer on the part of the federal government that I should think it would be irresistible.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): May I ask a supplementary question. In view of the fact that press reports indicate that the energy board of British Columbia is not likely to make its final report prior to August 1, does the government expect to sign an agreement with British Columbia before that date?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): It takes two parties to enter into an agreement, let alone sign it. On the part of the federal government there is at all times a willingness to enter into an agreement along the lines indicated in my letter to the premier of British Columbia, in which this extraordinarily generous offer on the part of the federal government was put forward.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): I wonder whether the minister would like me to intercede on his behalf with Mr. Bennett, as I expect to be in British Columbia next week.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): All I can say is that I hope the Leader of the Opposition will not muddy the waters. I am not going to ask him to do anything except to keep out of this.