

whether the funding of such a program must have priority over others and that is what we are now considering.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

INEQUITY BETWEEN TARIFF ON IMPORTED CHEESE AND CANADIAN CHEESE IMPORTED BY EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Bill Jarvis (Perth-Wilmot): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture. I have given him notice. It concerns the Canadian cheese industry's trade with the European common market. In light of the minister's recent speeches pointing out that Canadian cheese exported to the EEC faces import duties of about 65 cents a pound whereas on European cheese coming into Canada there is only a one cent to three and a half cents per pound tariff, what action is the minister taking to minimize this gross inequity? Specifically, can he advise the House what recommendations he has made to his cabinet colleagues and what reply, if any, he has received?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the Canadian Dairy Commission will be returning from Europe tomorrow. I hope to have a report from him on this very subject. I should be able to report to my cabinet colleagues on the information he has obtained. Our people in the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce have also been very active in negotiations with the community.

Mr. Jarvis: In light of the fact that Canadian cheese manufacturers, because of milk supplies and allocations, have been forced into the production of specialty cheese in addition to cheddar, and in light of the fact that Canadian sales volumes of these products in the past 30 to 60 days have dropped between 25 and 30 per cent because of their inability to compete with European imports, does the minister plan specific action in this regard and when might that action be expected?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact I am aware of all of these facts—

Mr. Hees: Aren't you lucky you have us?

Mr. Whelan: You want to believe that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: We are aware of the problems the cheese manufacturers are having with specialty cheeses. This is being reviewed. I am sure the hon. member knows I met with some of the manufacturers from his constituency when in the city of London approximately two weeks ago. I discussed this personally with them. We are aware that Canada is one of the greatest free trading countries of the world. The tariff is only three cents a pound coming into Canada whereas it is 65 cents a pound going into the European community. This should be reviewed. We cannot be the good guys all the time.

Oral Questions

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

INFLATION—INQUIRY AS TO FURTHER MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS GROUPS TO ARRIVE AT A CONSENSUS

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of Finance how he is getting along with his phantom operations and mysterious policy for fighting inflation. Has the minister had a further meeting with representatives of organized labour? Has he had meetings with representatives of any of the other elements in our economy?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Yes, Mr. Speaker. We are indeed meeting with various segments of the economy. As a matter of fact, this afternoon the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the Minister of Agriculture and I will be meeting with some representatives of the business community.

Mr. Stanfield: Is the minister now able to tell us the name of this policy and can he tell the House very succinctly what he is trying to achieve with these conferences, or is that still as unknown to him as it is to us?

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I have taken steps to bring the hon. member into my confidence. I have nothing further to report to him at this stage.

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ENERGY

SYNCRUDE PROJECT—NUMBER OF CONTRACTS AVAILABLE TO CANADIAN FIRMS AND NUMBER OF JOBS CREATED

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. What percentage of the total engineering, manufacturing and construction contracts in the Syncrude project will go to Canadian firms? Also, is the minister prepared to table detailed figures on job creation in the project?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I do not have for the hon. member today an indication of the availability of either engineering or manufacturing work for Canadian firms. I will be glad to seek that for him. With regard to job creation, the estimate is that there are about 5,000 jobs on site in connection with the construction of the process. That does not include additional jobs, for example, on the townsite or other jobs related to the Fort McMurray area. It is estimated there will be about 1,600 permanent jobs available once the plant is in full operation. Of course, the job estimate does not include manufacturing job opportunities elsewhere in Canada.