

Oral Questions

● (1430)

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**ALLEGED EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN BENEFICIARIES—REQUEST FOR INQUIRY**

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Can he inform the House whether he has ordered or is about to order an investigation relating to statements made on the French television network about two weeks ago by five masked people that his department allegedly gave instructions aimed at excluding some categories of beneficiaries who theoretically would be entitled to unemployment insurance benefits?

[English]

Hon. Jack Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, we have already responded to that criticism in a press release issued, I believe, within two days of the media report.

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AGRICULTURE**SUGGESTED CURTAILMENT OF BEEF IMPORTS FROM AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND**

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, my question was to be directed to the Minister of Agriculture but in his absence I should like to address it to the Prime Minister or the Acting Minister of Agriculture. The question relates to the October 9 action of President Ford in imposing a total United States quota of 1.233 million pounds of beef under the terms of the United States meat import law. In view of the immediate and very real possibility that Australian and New Zealand shipments may now be diverted to Canada, in addition to our current excessive imports, and in view of Canada's very vulnerable position which permits unlimited access of imported meats at discounted prices well in excess of the "six cents under" agreement, will the Prime Minister or the Minister of Agriculture act immediately to prevent a further depression of all levels of our Canadian cattle markets with appropriate action on Australian-New Zealand beef imports?

Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government has acted today. The Minister of Agriculture has announced that the federal government is moving to place imports of beef and veal into Canada under individual permit control effective midnight on Sunday.

SUGGESTED DEMAND FOR RETRACTION OF AUSTRALIAN ALLEGATION CANADA RESPONSIBLE FOR CURTAILMENT OF BEEF IMPORTS BY UNITED STATES

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the announcement just made by the parliamentary secretary but I wish to address a supple-

[Mr. Cullen.]

mentary question to him. In view of the very serious charge made by the deputy prime minister of Australia that Canada was totally to blame for this predictable action by President Ford, especially during their election campaign, and since Australia has enjoyed unlimited access to Canadian meat markets with volumes much higher proportionately than their United States shipments, will the Prime Minister or indeed the government of Canada take immediate steps to set the record straight and demand a retraction from the government of Australia?

Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the minister has already answered the allegation by the Australian and New Zealand governments. I must add that this afternoon Canadian officials in Washington are having discussions with the United States officials to find out exactly how this new quota will be applied. That government has announced a global quota and the 21 nations which will be affected by it do not yet know what it will mean to them individually. Our officials are having discussions with United States officials this afternoon to find out exactly what it will mean to Canada.

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NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD**POSSIBILITY OF SEPARATING JUDICIAL AND ADVISORY FUNCTIONS**

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the glaring inconsistencies in the National Energy Board Act that came to light this summer in defining the quasi-judicial and advisory functions and the fact that there was nothing in the Speech from the Throne about this, does the minister intend to introduce any measures during this session of parliament to separate these responsibilities?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gillies: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is it the position of the minister that there is no problem associated with having semi-judicial and advisory positions held by one particular person? Does the minister not feel that is an impossible situation in which to place a regulator?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member makes a good point. I do recognize there could be situations in which there could be incompatibility between the advisory function and the judicial function. This is a matter which I have had under personal consideration for some time. Undoubtedly there will be an opportunity for me to discuss this with my colleagues in the weeks to come. Going back to the first question, it is not my intention in this session to introduce amendments to the National Energy Board Act for that purpose.