

[English]

## AGRICULTURE

### POSITION OF GOVERNMENT ON AGRICULTURAL TRADE AT GATT TALKS

**Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. In past years—and when I say past years I am thinking back in the fifties—at times Canada's farm exports saved the country quite large trade deficits. I should like to ask the minister if he would indicate to the House the position the government has taken on agricultural trade at the GATT talks that are going on at the present time in Geneva.

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Well, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member wants this in complete detail it would take much too long to do that during the question period. There are the consultations which are taking place between the provinces and the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and so on. I also want to inform the hon. member that at the present time the members of the Canadian Grains Commission are in different parts of the world outlining the different grades of grain that we have for sale to the millers and the grain dealers in the world. They are doing this type of thing all the time.

**Mr. Murta:** Mr. Speaker, that was not any answer at all. The minister knows full well what I was asking him. I would say further that if he does not have a policy he should say so publicly at the present time. I should like to ask him to pursue this point a little further. It seems that with the world food prices levelling off it will be vital to push for improved access to world markets for our agricultural products. The minister obviously could have said that himself had he wanted to. I should like to ask the minister if the government is prepared to take a tougher stand on the need for a freer trade policy so far as agricultural products are concerned. I have narrowed it down and maybe he can answer that question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Surely the hon. member will realize that this is a question of much too general a nature to be considered in the question period.

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## STATISTICS CANADA

### REQUEST FOR REPORT ON ALLEGED CONFLICT OF INTEREST SITUATION OF EMPLOYEES AND TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE

**Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce with regard to the Statistics Canada matter. Last week the minister left the impression that what was being reported in the press was a relatively minor matter and now we know there is a full internal inquiry going on and that Mr. Kirkham, the Chief Statistician, has asked his senior staff to file financial and interest statements with him. In fact that was to have been done last Friday. This is really quite a change in

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the circumstances from last week to this week. Would the minister report to the House whether or not he has any new information concerning this matter today.

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** No, Mr. Speaker. I have talked to Mr. Kirkham. He tells me there is no problem, that the people have filed their reports if they had any. Some of them are teachers at the university. I do not see any problem about that. A few of them have investments in other businesses. I am told that one has invested some of his savings in a hairdressing business and I do not see any conflict of interest there. So I am quite satisfied that the Chief Statistician has made sure he is taking all the necessary steps to remove any doubt and to re-establish the integrity of this very good institution.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that that is the report the minister can make to the House with regard to the matter. However, there is continuing speculation on the part of the public with respect to this matter. If I may say so to the minister I think it would be in the best interests of Statistics Canada and perhaps even of the minister if this public speculation were laid to rest once and for all. With regard to that matter, would the minister agree now to table in this house publicly and openly all correspondence and other documents that have been the subject of questioning in this House of Commons and speculation so that judgment can be ultimately and finally made.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, you know I think the best way to stop any speculation is not to ask silly questions like those of the hon. member.

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## COMMUNICATIONS

### AGREEMENT WITH MANITOBA ON CONTROL OF CABLE TELEVISION—CONFLICT WITH DECISION OF CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION COMMISSION

**Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications. Has the minister made an agreement with the province of Manitoba so that the province, through its own phone system, will own and control the cable system of that province, and is this agreement to be a precedent to be followed in other provinces.

Will you boys keep quiet. Mr. Speaker, I am trying to communicate with the Minister of Communications.

● (1450)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I have the impression that the hon. member has adequately communicated with the minister. Perhaps he would give the opportunity to the minister now to communicate with him.

**Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of Communications):** I hope I understood the question well enough, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me that the hon. member is asking me if I have signed an