

trained technicians to do this work, but I will look into this and report to the hon. member.

● (1150)

Mr. Mitges: The minister knows that without competent veterinary inspection in our abattoirs our meat exports to many countries would be adversely affected, and I ask the minister to do everything possible to see that this is done.

* * *

SOCIAL SECURITY

NEGOTIATIONS FOR RECIPROCAL AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES—DATE AGREEMENTS EFFECTIVE

Mr. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. On February 8 in the House of Commons when discussing Bill C-35 which deals with reciprocal agreements for pensioners the minister stated that France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States have expressed interest in having reciprocal social security agreements with us, and that preliminary discussions among officials had resulted in proposals. I wonder if the minister could tell us if the agreements will be effective by the date the bill becomes effective, I believe July 1. If not, why not, and when does he hope that the agreements will be effective?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first question is no. I personally met the ministers of the countries concerned last month. I exerted some pressure upon these governments to accelerate the settlement of agreements between our respective countries. There will be a meeting of senior officials in the coming months. We hope these agreements will be concluded very shortly, but, of course, I cannot in any way force a country to sign such an agreement. On the aspect in which the hon. member is interested, British citizens living in Canada, I obtained an agreement in principle from my British colleague, but he indicated his concern about the availability of funds in England for that purpose. I asked that the matter be raised again by our two governments, in order that the British government may make available the necessary funds so as to enable us to reach an agreement as soon as possible.

* * *

[English]

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

REASON FOR FAILURE TO USE CANADAIR CL-215 TO FIGHT FOREST FIRES

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. In view of the fact that there are approximately 115 aircraft of many types used in dropping water or chemical retardants on or in advance of forest fires, most of them being

Oral Questions

modified military surplus aircraft such as the Canso or Tracker or commercial aircraft like the Beaver and the Otter, while the only aircraft in the world designed specifically to combat forest fires is the Canadair CL-215, designed and built in the sixties under advice from experts in the Canadian forestry service, but which has been purchased in Canada only by the Quebec department of lands and forests which now has 15 in operation, I would like to ask the minister if he would indicate why this aircraft is not used by other provinces in Canada and what steps he is taking to help finance the purchase of this aircraft for use in what I term a very important protection measure for our forest industries?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I assume the hon. member is alluding to the use of these aircraft for water bombing to fight forest fires. This question came up at the meeting of the Canadian Council of Resources and Environment Ministers in Saskatoon. Everyone recognizes that there is a need to co-ordinate this type of equipment and to have it available on a national basis when emergencies do warrant it. The problem is that the provinces have tended to go their separate ways with regard to fire protection. If we can come to a national plan for forest protection, I hope it would be very much part of this plan to have very expensive equipment of this nature available on a demand basis under some shared-cost formula.

* * *

FINANCE

TARIFF ON TOMATOES—POSSIBILITY OF EXTENSION

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Hastings): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. I would like to ask the minister if the program with regard to the tariff on tomatoes, which was implemented earlier this year after repeated requests from both processors and producers, is being reviewed. Is it going to be extended?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I will have to take that question as notice, but I undertake to get back to the hon. member personally on that point.

PROPOSED FORMATION OF PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION TO ACQUIRE GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN CROWN CORPORATIONS

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Finance. Will the government consider taking the lead of the British Columbia government, which is planning to form a private investment corporation which will not be a Crown corporation to take over the government's interests—in the case of British Columbia acquired through the interventionist policies of the previous socialist government—in a number of industrial concerns and to offer the shares to individual investors who currently, in British Columbia's case, have nearly \$6 billion in savings