

Inquiries of the Ministry

without value at 4 or 5 this afternoon. There will be a time, no doubt, when the situation will stabilize around a bargaining table and I will then be in a position to make a useful report.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**IMPRISONED SYRIAN JEWS—GOVERNMENT ACTION**

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It is a humanitarian question in respect of the plight of imprisoned Syrian Jews about which the international secretariat of Amnesty International has recently expressed very sharp concern. Can the minister advise whether the government has been made aware of this situation? If so, what action has it taken or does it intend to take on this issue?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have been informed and we have been working through our diplomatic channels to see whether we can do something effective on behalf of these people.

Mr. Forrestall: Can the Secretary of State for External Affairs indicate whether or not he anticipates any position which would afford the government an opportunity to take some initiative in this case within the next week or ten days?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I hesitate to discuss this question too specifically. We have found that we have been most effective on behalf of people in this circumstance if we move quietly without declaration and without publicity.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS**WAGES PAID TO FARM AND TOBACCO WORKERS IN ONTARIO**

Mr. S. Perry Ryan (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Since on the weekend the Prime Minister led the public to believe that farm and tobacco workers in Ontario receive the minimum wage, would the Prime Minister inform the House as to what minimum wage law affects farm and tobacco workers in Ontario?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Well, Mr. Speaker, it would seem to me it would probably be the minimum wage laws of Ontario rather than of any other province.

Mr. Ryan: As Ontario farm and tobacco workers are not covered by provincial and federal minimum wage statutes and as 42 per cent of farm workers in Ontario receive less than the provincial minimum wage, would the Prime Minister consider correcting his advice to Quebec residents who may be considering moving to Ontario for employment?

[Mr. Pelletier.]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There are three minutes remaining before the end of the question period. I would hope that we might limit supplementaries. If the hon. member has a supplementary he will be recognized, but I would hope we would try to have no more supplementaries in the last three minutes.

ALLEGED IMPORTATION OF ASIANS TO WORK IN BRITISH COLUMBIA COAL MINES

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask a supplementary earlier in respect of the last revision of Aesop's Fables over the weekend having to do with the statement of the Prime Minister that British Columbia coal mines import Asian labour. I wonder whether the Prime Minister, with that appreciation of statistics which he said we all should heed, could inform the public as to what year he was referring to and has he any statistics to justify—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This type of question should be on the order paper. I cannot accept that it is a proper question at this time.

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CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS**INQUIRY AS TO INTRODUCTION OF COMPETITION BILL**

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It arises from a report from Winnipeg that the government has made no commitment that the competition bill will be introduced during this session of parliament. Can the minister inform the House whether the government has any timetable for the introduction of this legislation?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the report in the paper was somewhat erroneous. I was saying that there were certain measures which would have to be taken first before we could give a firm date. Those measures are primarily: consultation will all the provincial governments, and concurrently, return consultation with those who have submitted briefs. Both those series of meetings have been scheduled. One meeting took place in Manitoba on Saturday with the Manitoba government. Other seminars begin this Wednesday.

• (1500)

Mr. Dinsdale: A brief supplementary—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for a supplementary and then we will be pretty close to the end of the question period. I suggest to hon. members that an attempt should be made by them to try to limit the number of supplementaries.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, in light of the constitutional go-ahead given by the province of Manitoba, can the minister indicate whether unanimity on this point will be required before the bill is proceeded with.