

Inquiries of the Ministry

Quebec Premier in connection with gold mines and the dairy industry. I was twice told that after the election of a new Quebec government, it might be possible to try to solve both problems. Now, since April 29 has come and gone and the Prime Minister's dream has come true, can I ask him whether he will soon discuss the conditions of the gold mines and the dairy industry in Quebec with the new Premier of that province?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the new Quebec Premier wishes to discuss those matters with the federal government, we will be extremely pleased to do so.

[*English*]

PRICES AND INCOMES COMMISSION**JURISDICTION RESPECTING SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC FORECASTS**

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs whether the Prices and Incomes Commission considers it to be within its jurisdiction or responsibility to engage in short-term economic forecasting as to trends in this country?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I believe it has on its staff some officials and has been trying to obtain others to do some short-term forecasting.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question. Is it the role of this commission to give the government or the country as a whole any advice as to economic expectations in the short term?

Mr. Basford: In so far as it may have some bearing on price stability and the achievement of price stability which the government is anxious to obtain—yes.

Mr. Stanfield: One further supplementary question which I direct to the Prime Minister. In view of the persistent recommendation of the Economic Council of Canada as to the importance of an independent agency being established to perform this task of providing better short-term economic forecasts, will the Prime Minister reconsider this recommendation? I ask this question particularly in view of the confusion that seems to exist at the present time as to just what is the short-term economic trend not only in this country but in the world at large.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the government has at its means certain officials and tools with which to consider this question of the short-term economic future. The Economic Council of Canada does not have such a term of reference under the statute which set it up, although sometimes it does indulge in short-term economic forecasts.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS**ACTION RESPECTING FALSE AND MISLEADING ADVERTISING**

Mr. James E. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. What steps are being taken by his department in the area of inspection and surveillance in combating false and misleading advertising across the country and what prosecutions, if any, are outstanding in this regard?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that the information he is seeking now is rather far-reaching. I suggest to the hon. member and to the minister that the information should normally be given by way of a statement rather than by way of an answer to the question at this time.

Mr. McGrath: Then may I rephrase the question and ask the minister if he would be prepared to make a statement in the House, in view of the fact that he made a very serious policy statement on this matter in Vancouver recently?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Well, Mr. Speaker, in Vancouver the other day I announced that in furtherance of our campaign against misleading advertising—

Mr. McGrath: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister was whether he would make a statement in the House. The minister apparently proposes to make the statement now during the oral question period.

Mr. Speaker: My understanding was that the question was accepted only to the extent that it sought information from the minister on whether a statement would or would not be made. That is the extent to which the question has been allowed.

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, the estimates of the department are currently before the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, and I dealt at some length, I