

## Oral Questions

[English]

## AGRICULTURE

## MILK—POSSIBLE MEETING WITH PROVINCIAL MINISTERS TO REVIEW POLICY

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the very serious over-supply situation in the dairy industry in Canada resulting from the minister's excessive target support price in his current dairy policy, does the minister intend to meet with his provincial counterparts to discuss a review of dairy policy, which would have as its principal objective the availability in Canada of a ready supply of milk to consumers at lower prices than those prevailing at the present time?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that I have always met with my provincial counterparts when requested. I am actually meeting one who is here in the city for another function tomorrow morning, but I want to say that federally we have nothing to do with the price of fluid milk. Each provincial marketing board, utility or whatever it is sets the price.

To put the record straight, the surplus products are not being subsidized one iota by the federal government. The farmers have to look after disbursing that on world markets themselves. The price of skim milk powder here in Canada to consumers, as I said yesterday, is approximately 2 cents a pound cheaper than it is in the United States of America.

## SKIM MILK POWDER—SUGGESTED REDUCTION IN PRICE

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Since the federal government is currently spending a quarter of a billion dollars a year, or approximately \$12 for every man woman or child in this country, on subsidizing the dairy industry, and since the minister has direct control over the price of Canadian skim milk powder, which is now selling in Japan for a third of the price Canadian consumers have to pay, will the minister take steps in this area—which is directly within his jurisdiction—to bring down the price of skim milk powder in Canada which would have the effect of reducing the oversupply situation which the minister has created?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** As the hon. member will remember, when another product sold for three dozen for a dollar, consumption actually went down, so price does not have that much to do with consumption. The hon. member should realize that. I hope he learned that much from all the hearings which took place on that subject at one time.

However, the skim milk powder Japan is getting for so much less is not instantized. It is in 100-pound bags and in raw form plus it is for animal consumption because of age. That is available in Canada, and the skim milk powder which is being made available and consumed in Canada is being subsidized to the tune of 34 cents per pound. It is an instantized product, it is cheaper than in the United States and I think the hon. member should realize that.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

## POST OFFICE

## EXTENT OF JURISDICTION OF INJUNCTION PRESERVING UNION RIGHTS OF EMPLOYEES

**Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General, and it follows up a question asked of him the other day. In view of the moral obligation of the government with respect to the postal employees who have been suspended from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers since the strike last fall, could the Postmaster General be more specific as to the jurisdiction of the injunction issued by Mr. Justice John O'Driscoll of the Ontario supreme court, an injunction which preserves the rights of the employees while they are appealing this suspension?

**Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, the preliminary report I have is that the injunction is limited to that particular local and to the particular problems of the people who raised this matter through the courts. I have been informed unofficially that similar action is now being contemplated in no less than 14 other locals across Canada. I know this only from correspondence which has come into my office from a legal representative of these particular people, and it will be interesting to see if this decision of the judge will be used as a form of jurisprudence in coming to a conclusion with regard to the other locals.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** Could the Postmaster General indicate that in fact an injunction of this kind does preserve the rights of the employee during the appeal process?

**Mr. Mackasey:** I can only speak for the Post Office. Whether these workers are members of the union, suspended by the union, or even if they do not belong to the union in no way jeopardizes the rights of postal employees in so far as their jobs are concerned. What I said some weeks ago was that the constitution of the union provided ways and means of appeal and provides an outline very clearly of the procedures necessary before an individual can be suspended. No doubt it was the opinion of the judge that the constitution was not respected by the local officers when they suspended certain individuals.

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● (1500)

[Translation]

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

## REQUEST FOR REPORT ON DISCUSSIONS OF PRIME MINISTER WITH EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

**Mr. Albert Béchard (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

Could he briefly tell the House and the Canadian people how far the negotiations with the European Economic Community have progressed through his personal initiative?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, very briefly, I feel that President Ortoli's visit to