

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I did not really hear the hon. member's question.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McCain: With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, sometimes one has to use whatever pretext one can in order to get in a question, and I guess mushroom soup would be as good as any. I ask the minister what department would be instrumental in bringing about a change in the importation requirements with respect to mushrooms in any form?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, the department that has control over regulations governing food and the ingredients in food is that administered by my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Mr. McCain: Mr. Speaker, I guess I did not make my question as clear as I should have. I would like to direct two minor questions to the Minister of Agriculture. Why did he not have an opportunity to comment on a change that affects agriculture? Further, if there has been a change, as I understand there has been, is it to be in tariff regulations pertaining to mushrooms coming into Canada, is it to be permanent or is it applicable to only one shipment of mushrooms?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member seems to know more than I do about this subject—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan:—at least if one were to accept the premise to his question. I have been consulted, and the hon. member knows very well that I have been in close contact with the Canadian mushroom industry which I believe is an important industry. Further, I have been given assurance by my colleagues who have control over the proper standards that are to be maintained by our processors and other matters that this industry will be kept healthy in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I hope this does not mushroom into a debate. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport has a supplementary.

Mr. Joseph-Philippe Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. Bell: Speaking about mushrooms!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): In view of the concern of the mushroom growers of Canada, particularly those I know in western Canada, and also in view of the fact that there are 300,000 cases of Canadian mushrooms already processed and available for sale that have not been sold, will the minister reconsider his policy pertaining to importing mushrooms into Canada?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, my policy concerning the importing of mushrooms has not changed.

Mr. Hees: Whose has, then?

Oral Questions

Mr. Whelan: These imported mushrooms will have to meet the standards that any processor in Canada has to meet. I have been given the assurance that they will not be allowed to be dumped into Canada. As I said, I am sure the mushroom producers are aware of what I have been doing. I have been in constant contact with them and I am sure they have—how do you say it—a great deal of confidence in the fact that I am not going to let them down.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: There are just about four minutes left before the end of the question period. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar also has a supplementary, which will be the last one on this subject, after which the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Central Nova.

SUGGESTED REVIEW OF REDUCTION OF TARIFFS ON VEGETABLES AND MEAT

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to the one asked by the hon. member for Bellechasse. I would like to ask the minister whether, as a result of his meetings with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and their request that the government review its decision unilaterally to cut tariffs on a wide range of vegetables and meat, he can assure the House that this action will be reviewed in light of its possible disastrous consequences on sections of Canadian agriculture?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, in his question the hon. member is talking about the possible disastrous consequences on agriculture. The Minister of Finance has made it clear that if there are any disastrous consequences on agriculture we will take action. We are watching the situation very closely, and when any member can bring us evidence that there are disastrous consequences we will act.

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INQUIRIES OF THE MINISTRY

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration supplementary to other questions asked earlier. I would like to ask the hon. gentleman if there is a blitz on in his department against administrative inefficiency and excess expenditures to correspond with the blitz against UIC claimants?

[Translation]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General.

At the beginning of the week, the inmates of St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary enjoyed a topless dancers show. Could the minister tell us if it is his intention to present such shows in other institutions and if that initiative is part of the new rehabilitation policy?