

Inquiries of the Ministry

to say anything regarding the visit of three ministers of the government to Washington recently, and whether or not the United States government has given any indication that it intends to discontinue its apparent policy of applying quotas and embargoes against Canadian agricultural products?

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Before the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne is completed I hope to make a statement on Canadian trade policy which I think will contain the information my hon. friend is seeking. The visit to the United States concerned a number of matters. It would be difficult to answer the hon. member's question categorically, but I think the information will be forthcoming in the next two or three weeks.

SNAGBOAT "SAMSON"

REPLACEMENT FOLLOWING LOSS BY FIRE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. F. G. J. Hahn (New Westminster): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance, notice of which I sent him earlier. Is the snagboat *Samson*, recently gutted by fire while in New Westminster harbour, fully covered by the fire losses replacement act?

Hon. W. E. Harris (Minister of Finance): My understanding is that the Department of Public Works owns the snagboat referred to. If that department chooses to repair the boat or to replace it, I understand that, with the consent of the treasury board, funds can be used under the act mentioned by the hon. member.

CHEESE

IMPORTATION FROM NEW ZEALAND—INQUIRY AS TO CHANGE IN REGULATIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. O. White (Middlesex East): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Does the minister plan to make any change in the regulations that now permit the importation of New Zealand cheese when there is a surplus of cheese and other dairy products in Canada?

Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, there is no prohibition on the importing of cheese. There is a duty on cheese, and technically anyone can ship cheese into Canada who can do so over the duty. A verbal arrangement was made with New Zealand at a time when we were having difficulty exporting to the British market. New Zealand was asked not to ship cheese to this market. The circumstances under which the request was made have

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

changed. New Zealand was pressing to be relieved from that verbal arrangement and there seemed to be no very good ground for insisting that it be continued. The shipment of cheese has been made in the ordinary course of business in the same way that anything else is exported to Canada. I suggest it is a mistake to say that we allowed the import. The normal laws of the land were allowed to function in this matter.

Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner (Minister of Agriculture): In order that there will be no misunderstanding, I want it completely understood that I fully agree with what the Department of Trade and Commerce did.

Mr. Knowles: That is one for the record.

Mr. Argue: Who made the verbal agreement?

Mr. Rowe: We are glad to know that.

Mr. Cardiff: Was it not necessary to have a special permit to bring in cheese inasmuch as cheese was a commodity under price support?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): During the war years a permit was required to import cheese, for the reasons stated by my hon. friend, but at the moment cheese is not under price support so far as I am aware.

Mr. J. M. Macdonnell (Greenwood): May I direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture of which I have not given him notice? In view of the assurance that he gave a moment ago that he agreed with the Minister of Trade and Commerce, may I ask the Minister of Agriculture if we have now abandoned the doctrine of cabinet responsibility and whether, when a minister makes a statement, we now have to ask if the other members of the cabinet agree with it?

Mr. Gardiner: I was merely drawing attention to the fact that the hon. member who asked the question did not ask it of the right minister. I did not know exactly what might have been in his mind so I thought it was necessary to say what I did.

(Translation):

VETERANS AFFAIRS

QUEEN MARY HOSPITAL, MONTREAL—PRESENT EMPLOYMENT OF FORMER DIRECTOR OF NURSING

Mr. J. W. Dufresne (Quebec West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address to the Minister of Veterans Affairs a question of which I have given him notice.