

AGRICULTURE

MARKETING BOARDS—REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF CONFLICTING ON APPLICATION OF ANTI-INFLATION GUIDELINES

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. As the Minister of Finance, the Anti-Inflation Board and officials of the Department of Finance have already said that marketing boards for hogs, potatoes, soy beans, corn, tobacco, fruit and vegetables for processing, industrial milk, fresh fruit, fresh meat, broilers, turkeys and eggs shall be subject to the guidelines, and that costs in each case will be controlled under the cost rules pertaining to prices; and as the Minister of Agriculture said in a speech last night to the County of Holsteins Club at Lindsay, Ontario, when referring to farmers, "That's one of the reasons why the government has not moved to control the prices farmers receive for their products," was he talking through his hat, or was the Minister of Finance wrong in what he was doing?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Because, Mr. Speaker, most products which are under marketing boards are well within the guidelines which are provided for labour and other forms of commercial life in this country. Our farmers are restricted who sell their produce through price fixing boards. Other boards are not touched because they do not have any price fixing powers vested in them, so essentially they can do nothing to them anyhow.

REQUEST MINISTER INFORM ALBERTA COW-CALF OPERATORS ON STABILIZATION PROGRAM

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the Minister of Agriculture to review his speaking schedule, meet the National Farmers' Union in Edmonton next week and tell the Alberta cow-calf operators whether he will have a cow-calf stabilization program ready and in place in January, 1976, as he earlier intimated? What progress has he made with the provinces in this matter, and can he say if such a stabilization program will also be subject to the guidelines?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have already told the NFU and the Unifarm people in Alberta that I will be unable to attend their convention because I have other commitments. I only received notice a couple of months ago and I make commitments nearly one year ahead of time.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Some hon. Members: Ten o'clock.

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ANTI-INFLATION BOARD

INQUIRY WHETHER POLICY STATEMENT BY CHAIRMAN IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Prime Minister relates to the

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questions three front bench members asked about the statement which Mr. Pepin, chairman of the Anti-Inflation Board, made yesterday. I shall make it simple. Can the Prime Minister tell the House this afternoon whether the policy enunciated by Mr. Pepin yesterday is or is not government policy?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I should like to know what Mr. Pepin said. I do not think anybody in this House knows, apart from what has been reported in the newspapers.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): What did Mr. Pepin say?

Mr. Trudeau: You don't know.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

NEW BRUNSWICK—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE MULTIPLEX WILL NOT BE PHASED OUT

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. I gave the minister notice this morning. Will he assure members of this House interested in the welfare of New Brunswick that the joint federal-provincial industrial expediter, known as Multiplex and jointly funded by the two governments, will not be phased out for lack of federal government funding?

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Lessard (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, first I should like to thank the hon. member for having given me notice of his question. When that corporation was set up by the two governments it was created on an experimental and temporary basis. The support it enjoys proves its considerable success. The two governments are now negotiating the formula they could adopt to extend its activities. But the hon. member must recognize, as all of us must, that the corporation, as set up now, is only temporary and that it cannot pursue its activities much longer, as it does at the present time. However, I repeat that the two governments want the corporation to continue its work, probably on another basis; but no decision has yet been reached by the two parties.

● (1440)

[English]

Mr. Fairweather: Will the other mechanism that the minister speaks about include federal government funding?

Mr. Lessard: Mr. Speaker, I cannot give a definite answer at this point because, as I just stated, we have not reached a final conclusion in our discussions on that matter.