

Oral Questions

ment, both private and public, are subcontracting to Canadian companies who are capable of fulfilling their requirements?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I am mindful of the fact that he represents an area wherein there are a large number of Canadian manufacturers. I am pleased that he has brought Contact 81 to the attention of the public, a program which has permitted us to identify close to 4,000 new Canadian sources, new Canadian manufacturers, for some of the major suppliers of the Canadian government. It comes at a very opportune time in view of the joint announcement made by myself and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce about our new source development fund which will again enhance the creation of new Canadian manufacturing capacity.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS**BEEF PRICES AND SUPERMARKET PROFITS**

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Madam Speaker, my question is supplementary to the one asked by the hon. member from Saskatchewan, although mine is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

It is abundantly clear, certainly to a good many people in this country, that marketing boards for livestock or beef cattle would not be the answer to the problems which the industry faces at the present time. These are problems which have been brought on by high interest rates and this government's inaction.

● (1440)

I would like to ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs whether his department is looking at or will be looking at the charge that supermarkets are making undue profits at the expense basically of the producer and the consumer.

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General): Madam Speaker, I must tell the hon. member that the officials of my department are now studying all those questions.

[*English*]

Mr. Murta: Madam Speaker, I did not quite catch the minister's answer. I will endeavour to get a clearer answer from the minister and maybe one not quite as flippant.

INVESTIGATION OF CHARGES

Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar): Is the minister's department going to look into the charges that have been echoed in the press in this country that supermarkets in various parts of the

country, and western Canada is a good example, have been making undue profits at the expense of the consumer and the producer of beef in this country?

[*Translation*]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General): Madam Speaker, I replied that my department is looking into all those aspects. If the hon. member has specific accusations to make, he ought to do so rather than ask me an insignificant and meaningless question.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL SECURITY**INFORMATION GIVEN IN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES—REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF GOVERNMENT FILES**

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, I would like to get back to my questions of yesterday with the Prime Minister respecting some of these older security cases, a knowledge and understanding of which will be essential for the members of this House if we are soon to discuss the future of the security service. Due to what I believe to be inspired and selective leaks from within the government itself, there have been a number of press references lately to ex-Ambassador John Watkins and some of his problems. Knowing, as I think the Prime Minister does—the Solicitor General does in any event—that there are a number of investigative reports and documentations still available within the government, will he agree that it is rather scandalous that the Canadian public have to learn about these events through newspaper articles only? Why in the world can the government not start releasing some of these old files that are at least ten years old when they will obviously serve the public interest and the interests of members of this House?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs dealt particularly with the question of Ambassador Watkins in an answer he gave a few weeks ago when he stated that the government and the security service had no cause to believe that Mr. Watkins had in any way assisted any foreign power in security matters. This being the belief and knowledge of the government, I fail to see how the public interest is served by allegations about Mr. Watkins' private life when he was an ambassador. Maybe the hon. member opposite has a different view of what the public interest is. I see no advancement to the public or the common weal by this kind of story. It may titillate the hon. member, but surely that is not the purpose of publishing personal data about people.

The point is, and I made it to the former solicitor general, if he has cause to believe the contrary, if he has cause to believe that the minister has been misled in some way, in stating that there is no evidence to incriminate Mr. Watkins, surely he should stand up and make that evidence public or else give it