

Inquiries of the Ministry

of the fact that there now seems to be some doubt that passage of Bill C-176 will deal with the problems of trade between provinces and as the litigation in the province of Quebec has not yet got to the Court of Appeal, or at least there has been no decision, will the minister not review with the Minister of Justice the question of obtaining, under section 55 of the Supreme Court Act, terms of reference from the Governor in Council so that the Supreme Court can deal with this very important matter?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that the passage of Bill C-176 will improve this situation. Since the question was based on the premise that it would not, I would not think the other part of it is applicable.

Mr. Baldwin: Will the minister not discuss this matter and have either himself or the Minister of Justice make a statement, particularly having in mind the widespread view that one reason no action is being taken is that it involves litigation in the province of Quebec?

Mr. Olson: The Minister of Justice and I have had many conversations and discussions about this matter. The hon. member may assume what conclusions we reached.

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent-Essex): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question of the Minister of Agriculture, and I do this in all seriousness. Since there is some indication from governmental investigations of a provincial nature, and other investigations, that the broiler industry may in the main be under the control of a small number of companies that are in themselves part of larger industrial complexes, is this the influence behind the minister's decision not to refer this matter to the Supreme Court of Canada?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That question is not in order.

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HEALTH**POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS AS FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD**

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the results of a survey by the Food and Drug Directorate indicating that polychlorinated biphenyls, known generally as PCBs, are becoming recognized as a food and environmental hazard, is the government taking any steps to reduce the volume of this contaminant in the environment?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, that whole matter is under consideration at the moment and I will be pleased to advise the House and the hon. member what the results of our deliberations are.

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Mr. Aiken: Have there been or are there at present interdepartmental discussions on this problem?

Mr. Munro: I cannot assure the hon. member on how far interdepartmental considerations have gone on but, as I say, I know the matter has been given considerable consideration within my own department.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY**PUBLISHING INDUSTRY STUDY—TAKEOVER OF RYERSON PRESS BY UNITED STATES COMPANY**

Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Has his department commenced a study of the publishing industry and, if so, when will that study be completed?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, we have done that, and the study is now ready. It is being printed, and I presume that in the next three or four weeks I would be able to table it in the House.

Mr. Saltsman: In view of the seriousness of the fact that two of the major publishing companies in Canada are in danger of being absorbed by outside interests and as the study may not be completed in time to take any action, could the minister meet with his counterparts in the provincial governments and put a halt to sales of publishing companies until this study is completed?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, if the results of the study could be useful in the present discussions going on between Ryerson and the government of Ontario, I am quite sure we will find a way to communicate the information needed to the interested parties.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House whether or not he has received a submission from Ryerson Press or the government of Ontario with regard to the takeover of this company by American interests?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, I was in correspondence with the Ryerson Press authorities about three, four or five months ago, but that correspondence was mainly of an informational nature. They wrote to me because they had heard that the study to which I have just referred was going on in my department and they wanted to contribute to it. They made us acquainted with the general difficulties that the company was experiencing, but there was no specific mention in their letter of the actual possibility that it was going to be taken over by U.S. interests or specific request for financial assistance. The man in question answered my letter in a very distinguished fashion, and contributed to our information. We wrote to each other—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the minister and the hon. member would like to continue this conversation after the question period.