

Oral Questions

Mr. Broadbent: In view of the fact that the deputy minister of the department in question made a distinction between a full time elected union official and a part time official—the implication being that it was permitted for a full time trade union official to make the broad ranging criticism that is normally believed to be the right of a trade union official—and considering that the government in the Post Office, for example, has never considered it inappropriate to criticize the head of the postal workers union for criticizing the administration of the Post Office, would the Prime Minister soon undertake to make a statement in the House or in some other form make it very clear what the government's policy is in this respect, and make sure that what is appropriately seen to be the right method of behaving in one department is also applied in another department?

Mr. Trudeau: I do not intend to make a statement on this beyond what I have just said, and I cannot follow the tortuous logic of the hon. member who seems to feel that trade union officials somehow escape from the rules that apply to civil servants generally. The rule is that they should not indulge in political criticism of the government or of their minister. It is a very simple rule and it was applied a few months or a few weeks ago to a high ranking officer in the Department of National Defence, and it applies to civilians also.

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[Translation]

ENERGY

REQUEST FOR OIL COMPANIES TO FIND MEANS OTHER THAN PRICE INCREASES FOR RECOVERING INCREASED COSTS

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

The third paragraph of a press release in which the minister made public the message he had sent to the Canadian oil industry reads as follows:

Companies affected by the additional cost increases resulting from the changes in the approach to the oil import compensation program may try to recover these costs by means other than raising posted prices.

Could the minister explain what he meant by that? Was he recommending that oil companies use devious means to achieve their purpose?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have asked the oil companies for information concerning their expectations as to the wholesale prices of oil products after August 15, in view of the price increase for crude oil here in Canada. In this press release, I indicated that price rises were possible because of the price increase for crude oil, but that other increases were not to be included in the increase of the wholesale price. There will be probably applications for higher compensations because of other costs of oil products. We have asked the companies to justify their claims before they insist on further increases.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

[English]

AGRICULTURE

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNITED STATES, QUOTAS AND SUPPORT PRICES

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture I would like to address my question to the Prime Minister. In less than one month we will see the anniversary of Canada's global quotas, especially as they relate to Canada-United States cattle and beef trade. Over recent weeks cattle and beef imports from the United States have been averaging somewhere around 1,500 lightweight slaughter cattle which are non-quota. Another third of a million pounds of carcass beef is coming in from the United States, plus Australian imports which do indeed include some trans-shipment of beef through the United States—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member has a question, would he please put it.

Mr. Nowlan: What about Broadbent when he puts his questions?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan: He hasn't asked as many as Broadbent.

Mr. Hargrave: Now that the government has its stabilization bill passed through the House, does the Prime Minister not feel that the time is most appropriate to make the promised statement on Canada-United States agricultural trade negotiations, quota renewals and a support price policy which will have to change after August 11?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as to the possibility of a statement and on what occasion, I will draw the attention of the minister to the hon. member's question, but I can assure the hon. member that this matter has been discussed by the minister, that it is under review, and I believe that negotiations are under way with the United States.

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TRADE

POSSIBILITY OF INTRODUCTION OF MEAT IMPORT LAW—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a supplementary question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

An hon. Member: Another farmer.

Mr. Hargrave: In view of the obvious problems of the government involving cattle and beef at the United States border, which now may very well include eggs and the import problems with the egg industry, has the government given serious consideration to a Canadian meat import law somewhat similar to the United States meat import law as an alternative to the present system of border regulations? I ask this question in view of the