

Inquiries of the Ministry

of the decision of the United States to proceed with restrictive trade action under the DISC program, can the minister inform the House whether his department is studying these proposals for their possible effect on export of United States agricultural products to Canada and on our sales to them as well as the over-all effect on trade in farm products between the two countries?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, about all I can say at this time in replying to that question is yes, we are very concerned about this and are watching it very closely. Of course, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce has the primary responsibility in this area.

Mr. Gleave: In view of the statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, if I understood him correctly, that discussions had been undertaken in regard to the effects of the tariff on rapeseed going into the United States, are discussions still going on in regard to this particular product?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member misunderstood the Secretary of State for External Affairs. He was talking about rapeseed, among other commodities, going to the European Economic Community and not the United States.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF MANPOWER AND
IMMIGRATION REGARDING ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT
POWER—INQUIRY AS TO POLICY

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister if the Minister of Manpower and Immigration was enunciating government policy when he said at Saskatoon, as indicated in a news report, that the government must exercise additional power or more control over Parliament?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, he was perhaps thinking of the motion that the leader of the House was talking to a moment ago.

Mr. Baldwin: Was he also speaking about exercising more control over Parliament, and did he have in mind the Senate as well?

Mr. Trudeau: No, Mr. Speaker. I think he had in mind getting rid of some of the useless backbenchers in the opposition.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fairweather: A Merry Christmas to you, too.

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question on the matter of the Senate and on the exercising of control. Does the Prime Minister approve of the Minister of Finance having had a meeting with the Senate Finance Committee behind closed doors?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, surely the Senate can conduct its business in its own way. If the hon. member wants to have influence there, he must apply at the right door.

Mr. Baldwin: Will any more bribes be offered?

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[Translation]

MANPOWER

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—SUGGESTED
MODIFICATION OF WEEKLY REMUNERATION CEILING

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

As the maximum weekly wages are \$100 according to the standards adopted by the department, as the decree of the Quebec construction committee prescribes a much higher salary, as allowances are paid persons taking training courses, in view of unemployment insurance, and as it has become very difficult for the municipalities to comply with the standards, will the minister announce in the near future a change in the maximum weekly wages of \$100 which are not sufficient to ensure the worker his livelihood?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter, of course, is that certain salaries in many parts of the country exceed the \$100 a week which is the maximum of the grant that can be paid under our local initiatives program. But this is simply an average and it is the maximum which we can grant. That does not exclude the payment of more to specific people within the program. The figure was set at that level in order to try to encourage the creation of the maximum number of jobs, particularly for those with lower skills, and it is doing just that. The flow of applications from people who are obviously able to meet the criteria is such that I see no need to make any change.

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WELFARE

ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN TO EXPLAIN PROGRAMS—
ASSISTANCE TO MUNICIPALITIES

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Does he propose to undertake an advertising campaign to explain national welfare programs and problems, and why does he feel such a campaign is necessary at this time?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we intend to mount such a program which will be more extensive than the one we have at present. I do not find anything unusual in this. I thought that one of the functions of the information services of government departments was to explain government policies to people of Canada. That is what we intend to do in this case.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary and perhaps related question. What assistance does the minister propose to give to the municipalities which will have an extremely heavy administrative burden placed upon them this winter in administering welfare under the Canada Assistance Plan as a consequence of the critically high unemployment in this country?