

Oral Questions

done. I am not in a position today to give the details that have been sought by my hon. colleague with respect to the commission's request which, of course, is an arm's length royal commission. But I will be pleased to forward the requests of my hon. colleague to the chair of the commission, and I am sure that she will address those directly.

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[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Mark Assad (Gatineau—La Lièvre): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Before the free trade agreement in 1987, the Minister of Agriculture made a formal commitment to farmers to protect the marketing system. Given the events in Geneva in recent months and weeks, does the Minister of Agriculture intend to ask the Prime Minister to intervene personally in this issue, which is a matter of life and death for farmers in Canada?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member is aware, we have just had discussions with the Director General of GATT, Mr. Dunkel, the Minister for International Trade and myself with the Cairns group, with the Quad. After we had concluded those discussions, putting forward Canada's position on the strengthening and clarification of article XI, a position which was developed by the producers and by the provinces and put forward throughout the negotiations by the Government of Canada, I had an opportunity with my colleague, the Minister for International Trade, to meet with the leadership of the supply managed products in Canada. We went over the discussions we had all had in Geneva and the contacts that we had made and the position we have continued to put forward. The outcome of the discussions, as we concluded yesterday between the farm leaders and the Minister for International Trade and myself, was that we would continue to put forward the position for strengthening and clarification of article XI under GATT as had been

developed by the stakeholders and put forward by the Government of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Madam Speaker, that is not very reassuring. I would like to ask the same minister a supplementary question. On July 23, 1988, the hon. member for St. John's West, who was then Minister for International Trade, told us that Canada would refuse to conclude any negotiations with GATT that would endanger our milk producers.

Can the minister still tell us today, can he even assure us, as his colleague did in the past, that Canada will refuse to sign a GATT agreement that would endanger article XI? Yes or no?

[*English*]

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Agriculture): The hon. member has to recall what article XI is about. Article XI as it exists today is not sufficient in the minds of the producers of supply managed products, those industries, to give them the protection that they believe is important and the government believes is important, to allow them to continue the type of supply managed system that we have in Canada today.

In answer to another colleague from the Liberal Party, I had put forward that the discussions that are taking place are discussions between 108 nations. Canada has put forward its position on article XI for strengthening and clarification. We will continue to do that. The hon. member is speaking as if there has been a conclusion of GATT and those discussions. There has not been a conclusion of those discussions. There are 108 countries presently putting forward proposals to strengthen the economic activity in the world. Agriculture is one very, very important part of those discussions that are under way today.

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DAVID MILGAARD

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Finally, after having spent 22 years in prison, David Milgaard is having his case referred by the government to the Supreme Court of Canada for a review. The fact remains, Madam Speaker, that David Milgaard is still in custody.