

the fact that last week the Minister of Finance forecast a budgetary surplus of \$250 million, has the minister made representations to the government in an attempt to divert some of this surplus into an emergency assistance plan for western farmers?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

BRITISH COLUMBIA—INCREASES IN PRICES OF BEEF AND OTHER COMMODITIES

Mr. Ray Perrault (Burnaby-Seymour): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Is the minister in a position to state whether investigators from his department have been able as yet to determine the reason for the substantial increases in the prices of beef and other food commodities which have occurred in recent months in the lower British Columbia mainland area.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I do not really think I can add anything to what I said in the house Thursday night last. My office is receiving daily reports from British Columbia concerning the situation there. I have asked merchants in the lower mainland area of Vancouver, where there is a labour-management dispute, to exercise restraint, and said that I would name those who do not exercise restraint.

REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF PRICES AND INCOMES COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister whether his investigators have been able to come up with additional names for the prices commission.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): As I have said, I hope to make that announcement very shortly.

INQUIRY AS TO ACTION TO MEET RISE IN PRICE INDEX

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the house what steps his department is taking to deal with the rise in the consumer price index as forecast by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, indicating another rise for May.

Mr. Speaker: I suggest to the hon. member that he is asking for a statement of a very general nature which I suggest should be made on motions.

Inquiries of the Ministry

KENNEDY ROUND—PASSING ON OF LOWER PRICES TO CONSUMERS

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, a few days ago the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs was asked about the technique or method by which the consumer would be assured of any reduction in prices resulting from tariff reduction under the Kennedy Round. His answer then was that he was unable to give an answer. Did he himself thereafter tell the press outside the doors of this place that he did not want to say what the government would do, as he wanted to announce it in a speech in Vancouver.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Well, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry if the right hon. gentleman feels he has been scooped.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Parliament has been scooped.

Mr. Basford: As I said in the house the other day, I hope to make an announcement on this matter shortly, and I hope it is an announcement the right hon. gentleman will be able to agree with because I know he, as a fellow westerner, is as anxious as I am to see the policy of liberalization of trade carried forward as fast as possible.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It is not I who will be scooped. I should like to ask the minister whether he thinks that scooping parliament is in accordance with the responsibility of a minister.

Mr. Basford: No, but I think Vancouver is an extremely important place also.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

AGRICULTURE

DAIRY INDUSTRY—REPRESENTATIONS FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA OPPOSING FILLED MILK SALES

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. Has the minister received representations from the Mainland Dairymen's Association of British Columbia opposing the legalization of the sale of filled milk or imitation milk on the ground that it would destroy the dairy industry on the west coast? If so, what is the position of the government with regard to this matter?