

Inquiries of the Ministry

Hon. Douglas S. Harkness (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the right hon. gentleman for having informed me a few minutes ago that he was going to ask this question. The answer is that there has been no change in the support prices which were in effect when the present administration took over. Since that time, however, two further agricultural products, turkey and fowl, have been placed under price support.

BUTTER—INQUIRY AS TO GOVERNMENT ACTION
ON PRICE INCREASE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Jacob Schulz (Springfield): May I ask the Minister of Agriculture what is the intention of the government with regard to the condition existing in the butter market today, whereby the retail price of butter has increased by approximately 10 cents a pound in the last two months while the price of butterfat has increased by less than half that amount?

Hon. Douglas S. Harkness (Minister of Agriculture): I should like to thank the hon. member for having given me notice of his intention to ask this question. In reply I may say that during the last couple of hours I have had a check made of the market prices of butter at the wholesale level in several of the important markets in Canada. The information I have received from these markets does not bear out the statement made by the hon. member.

The prices at Winnipeg on August 3 for butterfat were 60 cents per pound and on October 12, 62 cents per pound. In other words there was an increase of only 2 cents. The price at Toronto on the same dates, August 3 and October 12, were 64 and 66 cents per pound for butterfat. The wholesale prices of butter at Winnipeg on August 3 and October 12 were 60 cents and 61 cents per pound respectively. In other words there was an increase of only 1 cent per pound. At Toronto the prices on these same dates were 60½ cents and 62 cents, an increase of only 1½ cents per pound. I might say, Mr. Speaker, that if any action were to be taken in regard to controlling the price of butter at the retail level, the responsibility would rest on the provinces.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Harkness: That is right; the dominion government has no means at the present time of controlling the retail price of butter.

Mr. Gardiner: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a further question of the Minister of Agriculture. Is it not true that there was a support [Mr. Gardiner.]

price on fowl prior to the election, and has there been any change made in that regard since?

Mr. Harkness: No, Mr. Speaker. The previous administration had passed an order in council which would have made effective price support on fowl some time, I believe, in the present month of October.

Mr. Gardiner: August 1st.

Mr. Harkness: August, was it? The first of August. We placed fowl under price support in July.

SHIPPING

REFERENCE TO CONSTRUCTION OF CANADIAN
MERCHANT MARINE

On the orders of the day:

Hon. James Sinclair (Coast-Capilano): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Public Works when the government intends to begin construction of a Canadian merchant marine, which they so frequently promised to do during and after the election?

Hon. Howard C. Green (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, that question really should be addressed to the Minister of Transport. As the hon. member for Coast-Capilano very well knows, this is a matter of government policy which will be announced in due course.

COASTAL TRADE—STATEMENT ON REPORT OF
ROYAL COMMISSION

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): The hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Chevrier) asked this question yesterday at page 15 of *Hansard*:

May I ask the Prime Minister a question. Can he tell us when the report of the royal commission on coastal shipping will be handed down?

At that time I said:

I cannot right offhand. I will make inquiries and at the next session of the house I will give an answer to my hon. friend.

The chairman of the royal commission on coastal shipping has advised that the report of the commission is in course of preparation but it is not expected that it will be completed for presentation until near the end of the year.

DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING DEEP SEA FACILITIES
AT LAKEHEAD

On the orders of the day:

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): I should like to address this question to the Minister of Transport. What plans has the minister