

Oral Questions

[English]

AGRICULTURE

**POTATOES—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO IMPLEMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS OF FOOD PRICES REVIEW BOARD WITH
REGARD TO MARKETING**

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is related to the tabling today by the Food Prices Review Board of its special study on potatoes and its recommendations, particularly those directed toward the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the statement in the report this morning that the board rejects mandatory supply controls as a method of stabilizing supply swings and instead recommends a potato market information organization and a contributory income insurance program that will be operated by the federal government, is the minister in essential agreement with the conclusions and recommendations of the Food Prices Review Board? What steps will he take to implement those recommendations?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, from the beginning I said that we would be establishing a federal-provincial potato study committee, and that has been established. It is holding discussions to try to work out what kind of program can be developed for the potato producers. I have said that it should be a one-desk selling system. I have not had time to read the report that was put out by the Food Prices Review Board, but they have been wrong many times in the past. I am not saying they are wrong this time because they have also been right many times in the past.

**POTATOES—REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
FROM ATLANTIC REGION TO COMMITTEE STUDYING
MARKETING**

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): I am glad that the minister is keeping an open mind in this situation, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps for him it may be the triumph of hope over experience. As a supplementary question, may I ask him whether, in light of the fact that some of the recommendations apply to more than just departments of agriculture, either federally or provincially, particularly in the area of increasing transportation difficulties and the present tariff problems with the United States, the minister will be adding to his committee representatives from the Atlantic transportation commission, which is presently studying this issue, as well as from the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, in order that a full and effective decision can be made with respect to the recommendations put forward today?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): I think the recommendations are obvious ones, Mr. Speaker. No committee would be that naive not to take them into consideration because they are so obvious. I do not know whether I should congratulate the Food Prices Review Board for putting the obvious into their report or suggesting the obvious, but any committee of any intelligence at all would be suggesting and studying that matter.

[Mr. Ouellet.]

**POTATOES—POSSIBILITY OF COMMITTEE ON MARKETING
INVESTIGATING COST OF PRODUCTION**

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, may I put one supplementary question to the minister. In regard to the terms of reference of this committee, will it have authority to look into input costs of production as well as merely the marketing of the product?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, again this would be a natural thing for them to do. With regard to the tariffs, if the Food Prices Review Board have experts on tariffs we would certainly appreciate hearing from them. Tariff discussions are going on at the present time in Geneva with regard to this very commodity.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

**REQUEST FOR TABLING OF REPORT ON DUMPING OF
HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS IN NORTHERN TERRITORIES**

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The media in my constituency have mentioned a report commissioned by the minister to look into problems faced by consumers in the north. Specifically the news broadcasts mentioned the dumping of hazardous products which have been banned by the department into the northern market. Is the minister prepared to table this report?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I shall look into the matter. I am sorry, but I am not up to date on this matter. I shall find out whether the report can be tabled and, if so, I shall be glad to table it.

[English]

**REASON FOR FAILURE TO ENFORCE HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS
REGULATIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY IN NORTHERN AND
SOUTHERN PARTS OF COUNTRY**

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, may I put a supplementary question to the minister. In view of the fact that products such as certain models of Sony television sets and children's bubble bath, which have been labelled hazardous by the department, were on the shelf for a considerable period of time after they had been removed from the southern market, can the minister explain to the House why the department's regulations were not enforced simultaneously in the northern and southern parts of the country?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I cannot. I shall check and give the hon. member an answer later on.

[English]

Mr. Firth: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister prepared to commit more of the resources of his department in the future to the task of ensuring that