

Oral Questions

the sole owner of the Manitoba telephone system—in other words they are negotiating with themselves—has the minister given guarantees that the private operators will have the ability and the license to expand into markets that at the present time they have not been able to expand into because the CRTC has withheld licences, even where hearings have been held two years previously? They have frozen any decision.

Mrs. Sauv : Mr. Speaker, as far as I know the CRTC is on schedule as to the examination of applications for cable.

Mr. Epp: No. Two years.

Mrs. Sauv : No, sir. They are on schedule. They come down with their decisions and I have nothing to do with the decisions of the CRTC as they apply to specific applications.

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TRANSPORT

DANGERS PRESENTED BY TANKERS IN STRAIT OF JUAN DE FUCA—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Transport. During the past fortnight there have been two incidents involving foreign flag tankers wandering about in the most dangerous fashion in the waters of the straits of Juan de Fuca—the Panamanian flag *White Poppy* and the Kuwaiti flag *Warbah*. I hope the minister has recovered sufficiently from his trip on the people's airline which so many of us are obliged to take as a matter of routine. I wonder if the minister has now recovered and is prepared to look into these infractions of good seamanship and tell the House what steps he plans to take to make sure they do not occur again.

● (1440)

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to look into the first incident and discovered that the vessel in question was under the voluntary control of United States authorities, under the existing arrangements. The voluntary system is due to be replaced with a compulsory system as soon as discussions between the United States and Canada in that regard can be completed. We look forward then to having one of the best possible systems of navigation.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I gather from the minister's reply that he suggests an accident on the United States side would not affect our beaches and fisheries. I wonder if that is the purpose of trying to place the blame on the American side.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I do not think any reasonable person could draw that inference from what I said. I simply indicated that in that particular situation the vessel was under the guidance of American authorities.

[Mr. Epp.]

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): But it was in Canadian waters.

Mr. Lang: I made no comment about what damage it might or might not do.

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CANADIAN DAIRY COMMISSION

REQUEST OF ONTARIO PRODUCERS FOR MEETING WITH MINISTER FOLLOWING FIRING OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Agriculture arises because of the sudden firing of the chairman and vice-chairman of the Canadian Dairy Commission. Has the minister received the telegram sent on behalf of some 18,500 dairy producers in Ontario by the chairman of the Ontario Cream Producers Marketing Board and the Ontario Milk Marketing Board which states in part that as a consequence of the reported appointment of a new chairman with little knowledge of the national dairy industry, "We are requesting immediate consultation with you" regarding the strong and respected leadership required of the Canadian Dairy Commission in these difficult times? If so, has the minister set a date for the meeting which was requested by Mr. Smeltzer and Mr. McLaughlin?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the telegram but my office has an open door policy and we will discuss anything with them at any time. Let me say that they make appointments from time to time. I do not think I have ever discussed this matter with them, but what they do affects the policy for which I am responsible and for which, on behalf of all Canada, I must answer. I do not object to what they do. After I explain what I have done and why I did it, I am sure they will not have any further objection. I am not aware of the telegram alluded to. As I have said many times in the past, their concern is my concern. This Minister of Agriculture and this government have given the dairy farmers of Canada the best income and the best dairy policy they have ever had in the history of this country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

ALLEGATION CHAIRMAN PROMISED HE WOULD RETAIN POSITION FOLLOWING SICK LEAVE

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The telegram was sent on Thursday and I think every member of parliament from Ontario, except the minister, got a copy. I can send the minister a copy of it. Can the minister confirm that when the former chairman of the Canadian Dairy Commission began his sick leave, he, the minister, promised him that his job as chairman would be awaiting him on his return, but that he, the