

Minister is not able to give me an oral response before the House rises, would he inform me by telephone or by letter?

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will see that somebody does that.

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● (1440)

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

UNEMPLOYMENT IN CAPE BRETON—REQUEST FOR MEETING WITH CABINET

Mr. Andy Hogan (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister may have been informed that on the weekend in Cape Breton, where there is such heavy unemployment, many eminent people including those holding public office, clergy, professors and labour leaders, attempted to attract the attention of the nation to the heavy unemployment in that area. They want some action from the Prime Minister in order to correct an abnormal and heavy unemployment. They look to the Prime Minister for answers. Has the Prime Minister anything to offer? Is he or a group of his cabinet ministers prepared to meet with them?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if such a group asks to meet with a group of cabinet ministers, we always react favourably to such a request.

Mr. Hogan: The Prime Minister knows that telegrams have been sent to his office for at least three weeks. He sent a Mr. Brian Fleming there. He has not yet reported to these people. This is the reason for the additional demonstrations. To date they have been peaceful, but we have no guarantee they will remain that way. How long are we going to be expected to be second class citizens in this country—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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AGRICULTURE

ALLEGED CHALLENGE BY MINISTER TO DEBATE MARKETING BOARD-SUPPLY MANAGEMENT ISSUE—ACCEPTANCE BY COLIN THATCHER

Mr. Frank Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the minister's recent challenge to debate the marketing board-supply management issue with anyone respecting the Canadian cattle industry, and in view of the acceptance of this challenge by Colin Thatcher, MLA, a practical cattleman from Saskatchewan, will the minister assure the House and Canadian cattlemen that he will indeed carry out his personal agreement to proceed with this debate?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has changed some of the words. I can let him

listen to the tape when I addressed the Saskatchewan Rural Municipalities Association when I said I would debate the merits of supply-management and marketing boards. I did not say one word about beef. The person who saw fit to cross the House in the Saskatchewan legislature is now trying to make some political hay. I am not going to change the commitments I have made for service to Canadians in order to give him a platform. I want to say one thing. I am not one bit afraid of him.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Is the implication of the minister's answer that he had anticipated an easy-going Liberal to Liberal debate but now backs away from a hard hitting, no holds barred debate with a genuine western cattleman?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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[Translation]

BILINGUALISM

DATE OF NEXT MEETING WITH PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE—POSSIBILITY OF PAYING BONUS TO BILINGUAL EMPLOYEES

Mr. Serge Joyal (Maisonneuve-Rosemont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Considering that in September 1969 the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission recommended in its third volume the payment of a bilingualism bonus to the categories of civil servants holding positions designated as bilingual; considering that a joint committee, the Treasury Board and the Public Service Alliance, have been sitting since January 3, 1973 to study the implications of the policy on official languages; and considering that the President of the Treasury Board acknowledged that the payment of such a bonus has been due since November 1, 1976, can the hon. gentleman inform the members of the House when the next meeting between his officials and those of the Public Service Alliance will be held to expedite the payment of this bonus, and whether he will consider the proposition providing the immediate payment of a minimum amount to all those holding positions designated as bilingual, even if it entails the adjustment of those amounts during the coming months considering that the discussions to this effect have been going on for four years?

[English]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I anticipate being in formal and detailed consultation with the Public Service Unions and the National Joint Council in a matter of days, probably next week.