

that something should be done by the government will be followed. Will the Prime Minister, in view of his knowledge of the constitutional position that parliament must decide, bring before the House a motion to this effect, which I am sure will be passed?

Mr. Trudeau: I am surprised the opposition did not use one of its many opposition days to bring in such a motion. There must be some disagreement within their party.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: The same old sham on the part of the Prime Minister.

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FRUIT

CHERRIES—REQUEST FOR ACTION TO ASSIST PRODUCERS IN VIEW OF EFFECT OF IMPORTS ON PRICE

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent-Essex): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance, one of the two self-styled watchdogs over the welfare of the Canadian farmer. In view of the fact that an abnormally high production of cherries in the United States is already responsible for sales of American cherries on Canadian markets at a price lower than the Canadian cost of production, can the minister say whether the Minister of Agriculture has made representations to him for remedial action on behalf of Canadian producers?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. gentleman that I have as many good farmers in my riding as he has in his. I keep in touch with my farmers, as he does. I maintain consultation with my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture. Officials of both our departments have been asked to prepare a detailed report for cabinet on an urgent basis. In the meantime, I have directed that the necessary discussions with United States authorities take place forthwith.

[Later:]

Mr. Kenneth J. Higson (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture. Has he received representations from fruit growers' associations expressing concern as to the present emergency situation to which the hon. member for Kent-Essex referred, and will he indicate what representations he has made to the Minister of Finance to assist Canadian fruit growers in realizing a fair return on their product without the depressing influence of offshore products?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have received representations from them. I have made representations to the Minister of Finance and consulted with him. I talked with the Minister of Agriculture for Ontario at about 12.30 today. He is satisfied we are doing everything possible and that if we act as we intend to act it will be more than satisfactory.

An hon. Member: Oh, come on.

Oral Questions

[Later:]

Mr. G. H. Whittaker (Okanagan Boundary): Mr. Speaker; my question is supplementary to questions directed to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the fact the Prime Minister has said that the Minister of Agriculture looks after important government policy for the protection of primary producers, a policy that must involve the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Will the hon. member kindly ask his question. I think his introduction is perhaps a bit lengthy.

Mr. Whittaker: I should like to ask the Minister of Agriculture what he has recommended to the government regarding the situation that has developed in respect of Canadian cherry marketing?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member knows there are certain things he will just have to be patient about and wait to hear.

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● (1500)

FINANCE

ALLEGATION OF DEBT OWED THE TREASURY BY FOREIGN-CONTROLLED COMPANY—STEPS TO RECOVER

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the charge by the Auditor General in his most recent report that the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce failed to safeguard an account for \$2.7 million in public funds owned by an unidentified company, will the minister confirm that the foreign-controlled Canadian Marconi Limited is the firm involved, and will he tell the House what steps have been taken to rectify the situation?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to confirm that report.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): He is not in a position to deny it, either.

Mr. Knight: Will the minister investigate the matter and inform the House whether the failure to safeguard the \$2.7 million account resulted solely from incompetent administration or whether the influence of such prominent Liberals as Hazen Hansard, a director of Canadian Marconi Limited—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member knows that a question asked in those terms is not in order.