

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that the hon. member recognizes the intrinsic value of the program and admits that it is working marvellously well in his provinces. I can assure him, on the other hand, that we decide from day to day, according to the influx of applications, on the means to be taken to answer as quickly as possible the applications of the people in his province.

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[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

INVESTIGATION OF SALE OF CANDU REACTORS—REQUEST FOR REPORT ON ALLEGED DISCOVERY OF ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Solicitor General I direct my question to the Minister of Justice. It concerns the ongoing RCMP investigation of AECL's involvement in the sale of Candu reactors. The *Financial Post* of June 18 says:

...the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have actually broadened the ambit of their criminal investigation to include a number of newly discovered suspect payments made by Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.

I ask the minister, to what newly discovered suspect payments does this story allude? Second, when will the RCMP make its report? The Solicitor General said some weeks ago it would be tabled by now. Finally, because of the important work the public accounts committee is doing in this regard, when will this new evidence be referred to that committee?

● (1450)

Hon. Ron Basford (Acting Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I doubt very much whether the nature of that evidence can be disclosed until the investigation is completed and it is indicated whether criminal charges should be laid. I will, of course, refer the question to the Solicitor General and see that any additional answer that might be made will be made.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS

EFFECT ON PRICE OF ESTABLISHMENT OF CHICKEN MARKETING BOARD—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding my party's original stand vis-à-vis marketing boards, I put the following question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to the spokesmen of Canada. It has come to our attention that a government report states that the recently approved national chicken marketing agency will cost consumers \$89 million during its first year in operation and in some cases certain individual Canadians will be paying twice the amount for chickens. As spokesmen for the consumers of this country, has the minister brought this matter to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture and discussed it with

[Mr. Coates.]

him, outlining the grave consequences of this action? Who prepared this government document? Where did it come from?

Hon. A. C. Abbott (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I gather that the report to which the hon. member is referring is one released by the Consumers' Association of Canada. I understand it has not been obtained from my department. I would point out, as the hon. member is aware, that the system of supply-management marketing boards contemplated under the National Farm Marketing Act and the chicken broiler plan does contemplate some border controls to stabilize the industry here in Canada. I suppose it is fair to say, if experience proves any guide, that Canadian consumers will regrettably be faced with price increases. However, I certainly do not wish to provide any such estimate as that contained in the hon. member's comment. I can only hope that the price increases will be as modest as possible.

POSSIBILITY OF MILK PRICE WAR BETWEEN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Was not this a confidential report prepared by the minister's department? I will reiterate my question. Has the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs raised this matter with the Minister of Agriculture now that the recent report has indicated that the Canadian consumer may be the victim of a price war between the federal authority and the provinces in relation to milk? These are two important problems involving the Canadian consumer. One, we assume, is based on a confidential report from the minister's department. Has he raised these serious matters with the Minister of Agriculture and what kind of a break, as a result of the minister's representations to the Minister of Agriculture, can the Canadian consumer expect?

Hon. A. C. Abbott (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment on the suggestion about the price war that the hon. member refers to between the provinces and the federal government on milk. Also, I cannot confirm or deny the existence of the study to which he refers because, as I suggested to him, what he refers to is not something released by my department, to the best of my knowledge. The hon. member asks if I have brought my point of view or that of my department to the Minister of Agriculture. I point out to him that the National Farm Marketing Act contemplates a poultry marketing scheme. Hearings were held under the act. A recommendation was made by the Minister of Agriculture to cabinet which bore a positive response from those hearings held under the act. I cannot go beyond that and discuss with the hon. member what my views might have been at that time when the recommendation was made by the Minister of Agriculture.