

Oral Questions

public participation in the development of the oil sands of Alberta and the heavy oil of northern Saskatchewan?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I take it the hon. gentleman means public participation by somebody, but not necessarily by the federal sector. I would be prepared to canvass that question with them, and also would be prepared to canvass my colleagues on whether this is the way in which the federal government should become involved in the oil sands.

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WEIGHTS AND MEASURES**METRIC SYSTEM—COMPENSATION TO SCHOOLS FOR COST OF CONVERSION**

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the decision to go to metric conversion, has any decision been made by the minister's department to compensate school divisions faced with a conversion cost of \$4 per student in some cases and up to \$50 for vocational students in the public system?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, no decision has been made for compensation. The House will have an opportunity on an early occasion I hope to debate the whole metric conversion program through a resolution of the House of Commons.

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INDUSTRY**LUMBER—GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO IMPROVE MARKETS**

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. On Monday, October 28, in the absence of the minister I directed a question to the right hon. Prime Minister concerning the decline in housing starts which is bringing about a disastrous situation in our production of lumber, especially in Nova Scotia where Bowaters Mersey has announced the closing of its Bridgewater mill in December because they have absolutely no sales whatever for 1975. The Prime Minister said he would take the question as notice. I now ask the minister if he has taken any steps recently to improve our lumber markets within the European Common Market countries or Iran or the Republic of China on Taiwan where there is a market for Canadian products?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I gave an answer in the House early this week on that precise point.

Mr. Crouse: A supplementary question. If I remember, Mr. Speaker, the question was asked by a member from British Columbia and the minister stated that he had taken steps to improve markets in Japan and in the Middle East, but he said absolutely nothing about improving our markets for lumber in the European Common

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

Market or in Iran or the Republic of China on Taiwan. I would ask the minister now if he could give an explicit answer to my question?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I was of course referring to Iran when I referred to the Middle East. On the second point, we have taken a number of initiatives with respect to other markets. I mentioned Cuba and Iceland. I have taken initiatives as far as Europe is concerned and very recently we had a forestry mission from the Common Market that crossed the country to look at the Canadian situation. We have also taken a number of initiatives to develop the market in Japan. I will have to make inquiries as to the nature of initiatives taken in Taiwan.

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AGRICULTURE**RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF SUGAR BEET INDUSTRY—REQUEST FOR PROGRESS REPORT**

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, a question for the Minister of Agriculture. The urgency of this question is the continuing high price of sugar. Can the minister give the House a report on the progress being made to re-establish the sugar beet industry in southwestern Ontario so that more of our sugar requirements can be produced in Canada or has the minister come to the conclusion that he will never be able to convince his cabinet colleagues that there would be any value in such an industry or a sugar policy for Canada?

● (1450)

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I am divulging any great secret when I say that discussions concerning the sugar industry are going on right today. I hope to be able to present a report to parliament by the end of November.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE**FEED GRAIN—INQUIRY AS TO ADEQUACY OF SUPPLY**

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

On October 3 last, the president of the Agricultural Producers' Union sent a letter to the minister seeking his assurance that Quebec producers would be provided with the necessary supply of grain to feed their herds during the coming winter.

Has the minister replied to this organization and can he tell the House the gist of his reply? Can this assurance be given? In the negative, can he advise the House today that Quebec producers can count on their necessary supply?

[English]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, members of the Canadian Livestock Feed Board were in my office the day I appeared before a certain committee and reported to me that they expect that the