

S. O. 21

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

AGREEMENT ON DEVELOPMENT OF FOOD PRODUCTION SIGNED AT QUEBEC—GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION

Mr. Gabriel Desjardins (Témiscamingue): Last Tuesday, February 17, Mr. Speaker, a food production development agreement was signed in Quebec City.

The Ministers involved, particularly the Canadian Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise), are to be commended for this timely initiative to grant \$35 million for food production development in Quebec over the next five years.

These funds will be expended for research and development, technical innovations, new initiatives, as well as soil conservation and quality improvement.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is one of the major economic sectors of my region, and I would urge all Abitibi-Témiscamingue agricultural institutions, organizations and businesses to take full advantage of this agreement. This is a unique opportunity for the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region to play a leading role in Quebec's food production development.

* * *

ENERGY

GASOLINE PRICE INCREASES ANNOUNCED BY PETROLEUM COMPANIES CONDEMNED—REQUEST FOR INQUIRY

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montréal—Sainte-Marie): Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, Shell Canada followed the bad example of the Conservative Government which, for the fourth time, has increased the tax on gasoline by one cent a litre. Shell Canada has hiked gas prices by two cents a litre with the result that, in a single day, the price of a litre of gas went up from 49.7 cents to 52.7 cents.

As you may recall, Mr. Speaker, Ultramar led the way last November 4 with a two-cent-a-litre increase in the price of gas.

We are all aware of the Shell-Ultramar shady deals which highlighted the closure of the Montreal East Gulf refinery.

I would urge the Government to make an inquiry to find out whether these two companies might be colluding. One month Shell management announce their decision to boost gas prices, followed in turn by Ultramar the month after.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that all Members of the House bring pressure to bear on the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Masse) to make sure that the oil multinationals are not using Canada's frigid climate as an excuse to increase heating oil prices.

● (1110)

[English]

PROPOSED NATIONAL SPACE AGENCY

CALL FOR ESTABLISHMENT IN NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Mr. Bill Tupper (Nepean—Carleton): Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne announced the creation of a National Space Agency, an initiative I fully support because it will help bring Canada into the 21st century. I believe the agency should be established in the National Capital region. Some 80 per cent of the persons likely to be part of the agency are already located here. To move or replace them would be expensive, inefficient, and disruptive to the national space effort. Furthermore, any loss of this skilled resource could set our space program back three to ten years.

The agency will co-ordinate the space activities of government Departments, space laboratories, and test facilities, most of which are in Ottawa, and develop linkages with other international space organizations and Governments. It will also have a major contract awarding function. This is a national agency involving all parts of the Canadian infrastructure. The arguments in support of locating the agency in the National Capital region are substantive.

* * *

REVENUE CANADA

REVIEW OF FARM MACHINERY PURCHASE CONTRACTS

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, Revenue Canada, with the Minister's approval, has decided that it knows farm machinery prices better than the farm machinery market and is attempting to rewrite contracts made in 1983 and 1984 in a way which will reduce the investment tax credit allowed, reduce the capital gain on the trade-in, and reduce the capital cost allowance to the farmer, by arbitrarily changing the contract and the value of the trade-in.

Why has the Minister decided to intervene by retroactively changing the values on contracts that were arrived at competitively and at market prices? We do not know and the Minister has not explained. Since the procedure being used by Revenue Canada was abandoned before, can the Minister tell us why he has decided to intervene and, in effect rewrite the contracts to suit the Department rather than reflect real life? More important, under what specific section of the Income Tax Act does he think he finds this authority to intervene retroactively? Surely taxpayers have a right to consistent, fair, and legal practices when the Minister and his Department decide to conduct a review.