

Oral Questions

implementing the proposal, but I have not totally ruled it out. While I do not want to raise too much expectation, we are still looking at it.

I can say that we are very close to announcing a substantial payment under the Western Grain Stabilization Act that will be in their hands prior to spring seeding.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, the Minister said that he is looking at the possibility of a spring seeding cash advance. Does that also apply to this year as well? Has he ruled it out for this year, or can the farmers expect the possibility of such an advance before May 1?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, I can say that we have to consider this year because the reason why we are talking about the problem is that we had a poor crop last year. If we talk about it for an upcoming season, it would mean that we are clairvoyant and would know what kind of crop we will have in the current growing season. Obviously, we do not know that. Therefore, in order to make it useful, we must consider it in terms of the coming year. As I said, we have not totally ruled it out, but it seems that it would be very difficult to administer, and in some cases could cause problems for farmers who need credit the most.

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LABOUR

CLOSURE OF WABASSO PLANT IN WELLAND—PLIGHT OF WORKERS

Mr. Allan Pietz (Welland): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Labour. During October of 1984, 490 workers in my riding of Welland received employment termination notices from the Wabasso Textile Company. The Welland plant was the first Wabasso plant to close. The older laid-off workers received some assistance from the Labour Adjustment Review Board legislation. This legislation expires in five months' time. I would like, therefore, to ask the Minister how his future plans for LARB will affect these workers and other possible textile worker lay-offs.

● (1440)

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the Hon. Member that although the LAB program is scheduled for review in August of this year, with a possible extension of three more years, I can also assure the Hon. Member and those individuals who come under that program that their benefits will be ongoing.

AGRICULTURE

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND SWINE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Minister of Agriculture, but in his absence I will put it to the Acting Minister. Last week the United States slapped a countervailing duty of \$12.50 a hog on our exports to the United States. This week there are three teams of U.S. investigators from the Department of Commerce combing through the books and records of the Provincial Marketing Board and stabilization programs of the provinces and the federal Government. In light of the U.S. investigation which is going on this week, is the Government continuing to support the Prince Edward Island Swine Incentive Program? I ask this question because this Program is very important to the viability of the new kill and chill facility in Prince Edward Island. Can the Minister clarify that situation?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): I am sorry I cannot bring the Hon. Member up to date on that program, Mr. Speaker. I will take the question as notice and bring him up to date the earliest possible time.

UNITED STATES DUTY ON CANADIAN HOG EXPORTS

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. It is about the countervail duty itself because it is having a devastating impact on Canada's pork producers, especially coming two weeks after the summit in Quebec City at which all these problems were supposed to have been ironed out. Would the Acting Minister make a commitment to the hog producers to have the Prime Minister telephone the President to ask him to call back these Department of Commerce investigators, and to lift this duty which is having a devastating impact on agriculture in Canada?

Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the devastating effect that these duties are having on the Canadian hog producers.

I want to advise that yesterday our government officials met with the hog producers in Canada and their counsel to assist them with their hearing that will be held in Washington later in June. I would also like to remind the hon. gentleman that the levies at this time are temporary. We have an opportunity to make further representations, and we are hopeful that we will be able to persuade the tribunal that the levies are not warranted at this time.

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CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

PLANTING OF UNLICENSED VARIETIES OF WHEAT

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board. He will know that plantings of the unlicensed short straw wheat varieties in western Canada went up over