

AGRICULTURE

SPECIAL CANADIAN GRAINS PROGRAM—REQUEST FOR
INCLUSION OF HAY PRODUCERS

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, compared to most of the questions from the Opposition this afternoon, my question—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

An Hon. Member: Sit down.

Mr. Taylor:—my question to the Minister of Agriculture.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Next?

Mr. Speaker: The Members cannot compare the Hon. Member's question with other questions until we have at least heard it. Would the Hon. Member put his question?

Mr. Taylor: In view of the fact that subsidies paid for the production of barley and greenfeed enable the producers to sell these products to the feeders at a price which undercuts the price of hay, and since the subsidies paid to U.S. farmers for the exportation of compressed hay to Japan stops Canadian hay producers from selling to that market, will the Minister qualify Canadian hay producers for assistance under the Special Canadian Grains Program?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question and I appreciate the Hon. Member's continuing interest in the problems of Canadian agriculture. However, the Hon. Member will know that the rules, guidelines and criteria were established by ourselves in close co-operation and concert with 35 or 40 farm leaders across the country.

The Hon. Member will know as well that to be eligible for the Special Canadian Grains Program market prices must have been directly and detrimentally affected by the U.S. Farm Bill and the Export Enhancement Program. It was the decision of the farm leaders that, of course, hay would not meet the criteria. The Hon. Member will know as well that we established advisory groups in both eastern and western Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Wise: They have considered and, indeed, reconsidered, and have decided that it would not meet the guidelines.

Oral Questions

CANADA POST CORPORATION

SECURITY OF MAIL

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Post Office. He assured me yesterday that security of the mail would be taken care of and that replacement workers would have to meet the same kinds of standards as regular post people. We find now that in fact a member of the CBC was able to get a job as an alternative worker with just a telephone number and an insurance number, whereas the regular workers have to be bondable, finger printed, and checked out before they actually touch the mail.

Will the Minister now admit that he is playing fast and loose with the security of the mail and is giving out keys to people who have not been properly checked?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated yesterday, I checked with Canada Post Corporation and was informed this is standard practice and that permanent employees, when they are hired, start on salary and the security check by the RCMP, in terms of criminal record, is subsequently undertaken as quickly as possible. If it is found they are unsuitable for employment in the Post Office, they are dismissed. That is the same procedure that applies in this case.

Mr. Manly: Just like Roch LaSalle's office.

Mr. Andre: Obviously, in this circumstance, where we are talking about a lot of people in short order, there is not a guarantee that 100 per cent were done within first half hour they started work. Every precaution has been taken and anyone who steals from the mail will be committing a criminal offence and will be taken care of.

TRAINING OF PERSONNEL AND SECURITY CHECKS

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Obviously the Minister and the Post Office should not be hiring these replacement workers anyway because of the provocation that presents. But I must point out to the Minister that when a regular post person is hired, they are trained for a couple of weeks—

Some Hon. Members: order.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair always tries to accommodate Members with preambles but I think the Hon. Member has laid the foundation for the question and I would ask that the question be put.

Mr. Keeper: Is the Minister not aware that a regular post person when hired has a training period during which the security check can take place before the person actually goes out and delivers the mail, not the way it is happening now with these casual employees where someone can just walk in off the street, is given the mail, and there is no basic security for the mail?