

Oral Questions

and, if so, has the government investigated the possibility of utilizing this valuable energy source to help meet the energy crisis in eastern Canada, particularly in the Montreal area?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, this is a question of interruptible power and therefore it would have to be found to be surplus to Canadian needs. As to whether it is in fact surplus to Canadian needs, this is what the Energy Board has been holding a hearing about.

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GRAIN**SHORTAGE OF FEED GRAIN IN EASTERN CANADA—
REQUEST THAT WHEAT BOARD MAKE SUFFICIENT
QUANTITIES AVAILABLE**

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, since the minister responsible for the Wheat Board advised the House yesterday that 150 cars would be made available by the CNR for eastern Canadian grain requirements, and since the feed grain supply in the eastern area of Canada is critical, would the minister now advise the Wheat Board to offer feed grain in sufficient quantities for loading into these 150 cars?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I should think that the hon. member and all hon. members would appreciate that throughout the situation where feed was in short supply domestically, either in the far eastern or far western parts of Canada, the Canadian Wheat Board has acted in an admirable fashion to make sure that domestic needs were served first.

Mr. McCain: Since I have been informed that dealers in the east are unable to get any wheat from the Wheat Board this week, and very little oats and barley, would the Minister of Agriculture please intercede on behalf of eastern agriculture and these mills which have been out of some varieties of grain for up to two weeks?

Mr. Speaker: That is a representation.

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AGRICULTURE**FERTILIZERS—ALLEGED SHORTAGE IN CANADA CAUSED BY
SALE TO UNITED STATES—GOVERNMENT ACTION**

Mr. Ken Hurlburt (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the fact that fertilizer is moving across the United States border to the point where Canadian farmers' requirements are not being met, and in view of the fact that fertilizer is being used to fertilize Washington forests, would the minister inform the House whether or not Canadian farmers are going to receive first consideration, or United States forests?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member recognizes, and remembers as well as I do, that the commercial fertilizer plants

[Mr. Harding.]

were built on the basis that a certain percentage volume of production would be exported. As I have said before, I am optimistic that the needs of all farmers in Canada will be looked after. We are compiling a report that I hope to submit to the House in the very near future.

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GRAIN**SUGGESTED FREEZE ON CLOSURE OF COUNTRY
ELEVATORS TO CONSERVE FUEL**

Mr. Craig Stewart (Marquette): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board and arises out of the energy crisis. If this crisis does exist, to conserve gas and possibly save longer hauls by farm trucks would the minister put an immediate freeze on the closure of any country elevators? This action would not only conserve fuel, but for a change the minister might do something that pleases the farmers.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Hillsborough. Order. The hon. member for Marquette is rising on a point of order, but I am sure he appreciates that a question asked in those terms is hardly in order. Perhaps the hon. member would rephrase his question. Although we have reached the end of the question period, I will recognize the hon. member for Hillsborough afterward.

● (1530)

Mr. Stewart (Marquette): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to rephrase my question. Will the minister put an immediate freeze on the closure of country elevators?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the question of whether the country elevators close or do not is, of course, one for the elevator companies themselves, the largest of which are the farmer-owned co-operatives which make decisions in the best interests of farmers. I do not think I should interfere in those decisions even on the question of energy.

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AGRICULTURE**MILK SUBSIDY—REASON FOR DELAY IN SIGNING
AGREEMENT WITH PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Now that the federal milk subsidy has been made operative in the nine other provinces, will he advise us when, oh when, will it be operable in P.E.I., and also reveal the reason for the delay for which Premier Campbell blames him?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether Premier Campbell blames me, but I am pleased to announce to the hon. member and the House that the agreement has been signed to begin as of December 10 for one complete year from that date.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!