

toward the policy I have been advocating and which we published in 1975.

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Speaker, would the minister tell the House if he has examined the primary handling and distribution centre concept put forth by the Newfoundland government following in-depth studies by the Canadian Kellogg Company, which will revolutionize fishing and plant operations on the Avalon Peninsula and the east and northeast coast of Newfoundland and which will put an estimated 4,500 people to work? If so, does the minister agree with it, in light of the high unemployment rate in this area, and will the federal government be participating financially in the development of this plan?

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, leaving aside rhetoric, I agree with a number of measures contained in the plan, as I have indicated.

There are a couple of areas where I disagree, and I will give the hon. member a few examples. For examples, part of the proposal is based on a large fishmeal operation for capelin. This was probably quite acceptable 1½ years ago, but with the condition of stocks at the present time I have some doubt that it is now feasible.

The other matter is that the plan presupposes that fish would be caught, frozen at sea and then delivered to plants where it would be thawed out, processed and refrozen. The economics of that operation are not yet convincing; in fact, they are so unconvincing that the industry has been very shy about this sort of operation for a number of years. Obviously, this can be examined and weighed against social implications in terms of job creation, etc. This approach should not be considered as the panacea for all the ills of the region.

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[Translation]

PENITENTIARIES

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF HOUSE COMMITTEE PERTAINING TO IDENTIFICATION OF GUARDS AND INMATES

Mr. Jacques Lavoie (Hochelaga): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General, to whom I sent notice of my question on November 22, since it is never too late to do things properly. During a visit I made to the Laval maximum security penitentiary I noted that some inmates did not carry identification while only one out of three guards carried some, and this is one of the things recommended by the justice and legal affairs subcommittee. Could the minister tell the House how many of those recommendations have been implemented up to now, how many are left and finally could the latest budget cuts be detrimental to prison security?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question. When I appeared before the parliamentary commission last week I

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explained what progress we had made as regards implementation of the subcommittee's recommendations. There are 38 recommendations which have been or are about to be implemented, Mr. Speaker, and one of them deals with identification tags for guards and identification cards for prisoners. We have had problems in making sure that guards wear their identification tags, but the recommendations have been accepted and we are putting all our efforts in ensuring that identification requirements are adhered to by both inmates and guards. As for security, I remind the hon. member that one of the main functions of the Canadian Penitentiary Service is the provision of security measures. No budget cut can have the effect of hindering security in the penitentiaries.

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● (1452)

[English]

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

PURCHASE OF HOPPER CARS BY BOARD

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport, who is in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, regarding the Wheat Board's decision to use the money of farmers for the purchase of hopper cars.

There were discussions last Tuesday afternoon at the National Farmers Union convention with officials of the Canadian Wheat Board and the Canadian Grain Commission. Canadian Wheat Board officials said they did not want to buy the cars, but were forced to do so as a last resort in order to protect grain exports and our grain handling capability, because the government and the railroads refused to buy the necessary cars.

In view of the fact that one of the most urgent problems is hopper car supply, and since it is projected that the railroads will continue to phase cars out of grain service at the rate of 1,800 per year for the next several years, will the minister now require the railroads, as requested by the Wheat Board, to purchase 4,000 hopper cars and repair 5,000 boxcars in order to provide suitable facilities for the hauling of grain; and failing that, will the government do it?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked me to require the railways to do something. It is a request which I am not at all sure I have the power to carry out. My first difficulty, therefore, is that he asks me to do something for which I do not have the necessary legal power.

The fact is that there is a very complicated argument about the number of cars required in 1979 and 1980 to carry grain. It is possible to take a cautious, different attitude with regard to that matter. The CPR has maintained that it has enough cars to carry its share of our projected 23 million tons of grain. I have indicated to them that I have some concern about that conclusion. I am considering the powers of the Canadian