

Oral Questions

or no answer. Is this \$1 billion of new federal money which will go to prairie grain producers?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, I think the only confusion is in the mind of the Hon. Member. He will know that the record of the Government is very substantial in terms of agriculture. We have met needs of agriculture before by reallocating resources. That has happened in the past and it will happen again in the future. The money which is being talked about will be additional money for agriculture within the fiscal framework. I hope that is simple enough that he can understand it.

FEDERAL FUNDING INQUIRY

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, the farmers of Saskatchewan will be making their decision on October 20, whether or not that is clear. Perhaps the Minister or the Prime Minister can help them. Is this \$1 billion of new federal money which will be going to Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta grain producers?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, the same thing happened a year ago—and a lot of the benefits went to the Hon. Member's province—when the federal Government came forward with some \$200 million to assist farmers faced with drought. It happened when we took off the gas tax on farm fuels. Some 30 cents per gallon have come off since the Government has been in office. As the Prime Minister said, it will be new money in the hands or pockets of Canadian farmers. They will realize, appreciate, and take that into consideration when they vote in the Saskatchewan election on October 20.

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PENITENTIARIES

CONSTRUCTION OF PRISON AT PORT-CARTIER

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question concerns the Port-Cartier prison. I would submit that the Prime Minister owes a duty to the House, and indeed to Canadians, to answer questions.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Prime Minister may or may not owe a duty to answer questions, but the Hon. Member will have to put his question.

Mr. Nunziata: I would like to put my question to the Prime Minister, not to the Solicitor General or to any other Minister. I would like to ask the Prime Minister very specifically whether he or any member of his staff intervened in the decision to relocate the prison from Drummondville to Port-Cartier. If so, what was the nature of the intervention?

• (1430)

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can advise the Hon. Member that the decision to locate the prison in Port-Cartier was a government decision. It was made by this Government to assist a depressed region of the Province of Quebec.

REPORTED MEETING ON ISSUE

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister refuses to answer questions—

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Nunziata: —I would like to put my supplementary to the Deputy Prime Minister. Can he confirm that there was a meeting in his office within the past two weeks to discuss the Port-Cartier prison issue, and is he prepared to table in this House all the documents there were considered at that meeting?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat the answer I have already given. The decision made was a government decision and it was designed to assist a depressed region of Quebec which has extremely high unemployment. We have no apologies to make for taking action of that kind.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SRI LANKAN HIGH COMMISSIONER

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. This morning he was given six confidential sworn affidavits by Tamils of Canada indicting Brigadier General Tissa Weeratunga for the torture of Tamils in northern Sri Lanka in 1979. Given this serious new evidence presented to him today does the Minister not think it time to invoke the Vienna Convention and declare Brigadier General Weeratunga *persona non grata*?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, just this morning I received the six affidavits in question and I will naturally look into them. Our inquiries so far on the first affidavit have not turned up any information to corroborate allegations against the High Commissioner. Our inquiries are, naturally, continuing.

REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the Minister said he would, if necessary, launch a full-scale investigation rather than the informal investigation he has hitherto conducted. Will he now at least launch a full-scale investigation given the serious new evidence presented to him today?