

re-establishment of the sugar beet industry in southwest-ern Ontario has received favourable consideration?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, even if it did receive favourable consideration there is no way they would be able to plan on planting sugar beets this year, that is for sure. I hope I have not said anything that could be so construed.

Mr. McKinley: A supplementary question. Can the minister advise the House how long ago this proposal was made to cabinet?

Mr. Whelan: It was discussed a week ago, Mr. Speaker.

FERTILIZER—GOVERNMENT ACTION IN VIEW OF POSSIBLE SHORTAGE

Mr. Sean O'Sullivan (Hamilton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the fact that farmers will soon have to be making plans for crops in the new year, and in view of the widespread concern that last year's shortage of fertilizer supplies, especially those with a nitrogen base, will be repeated and perhaps aggravated in 1975, can the minister advise if he has any estimate of this year's shortage and what action, if any, his department is taking on behalf of farmers who rely on these fertilizers?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we held meetings with the fertilizer industry and we have asked the farmers to make sure that they have not placed their orders in two or three places, as they did in the past. We have also asked farmers not to bootleg fertilizer across to the United States, as some of them were doing, in order to make sure that they do not cut short their neighbours' supplies. We think in most instances there will be ample supplies, but we do think that there is going to be some shortage of some of the nitrogen fertilizers.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES ON WEST COAST TANKER TRAFFIC—USE OF TANKERS WITH DOUBLE BOTTOMS

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs and refers to a news release from his department dated January 20 which discusses the west coast tanker traffic meeting held in Washington, D.C. I notice that the discussion centered around joint vessel management systems. I should like to ask whether there was any discussion regarding the requirement for those tankers to have double bottoms?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm whether that technical question was discussed, but probably it was. I think I did make an answer on that subject in the House some weeks ago, but I will be happy to check on it and see whether that particular item was discussed.

Oral Questions

INDUSTRY

UNITED AIRCRAFT—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE NO CHANGE IN OBLIGATIONS TO GOVERNMENT IN THREE AMENDMENTS OMITTED FROM TABLED DOCUMENTS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Supply and Services arising out of the United Aircraft documents that he tabled today. In a note to me, the minister said that all the documents pertaining to contracts between the Crown and United Aircraft have been provided, with the exception of three amendments to the documents which were not provided for reasons of commercial confidentiality. My question to the minister is twofold. First, could he inform the House of the dates of those amendments to the contracts and, secondly, could he assure the House that whatever else might have been in the amendments there were no provisions which exempted United Aircraft from any of its previous obligations with the federal government?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Minister of Supply and Services): The reply is yes in both cases, Mr. Speaker.

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[English]

ENERGY

LACK OF GUIDELINES FOR PURCHASE OF GOVERNMENT VEHICLES AND CONSERVATION OF GASOLINE

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, a further question to the government House leader arising out of the disclosure that, although the government is attempting to influence the decisions of individuals by changing its taxes with regard to conservation of energy, it has not yet adopted any measures or guidelines itself with regard to types of vehicles used. Is there any reason for the government imposing its wishes on the House and the public when, despite the lapse of a year, it has not been able to draw up guidelines governing its own conduct with regard to the purchase of vehicles and the conservation of energy?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think the explanation is really quite simple. The particular measures that have been taken in the tax laws are measures that are useful in this connection. What the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is considering is a much more comprehensive program which will include, of course, the measures that have already been taken in the tax laws. These are not in conflict.

Mr. Stanfield: A supplementary question. Would it not sit better with the Canadian public and get a response if they were asked to accept certain measures relating to conservation and the kind of cars and boats they purchase, if the government for once attempted to set an example? It would seem to be a simple matter for the government to adopt some guidelines in this respect itself and make these public. Is there any difficulty in that?