

*Oral Questions***SUGGESTED USE OF ARMED FORCES AIRCRAFT AND VESSELS TO CLEAR BACKLOG OF FREIGHT AT NORTH SYDNEY**

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, may I address my question to the Minister of National Defence. In view of the fact it appears that his department is giving support to the removal of the backlog of freight, I wonder whether the minister has received a request for increased support, not only through airlifts but on the part of vessels owned by the department? What action is the minister taking in this regard?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the armed forces have been helping to remove the backlog of freight. We have moved two and a half million pounds by Hercules aircraft on some 74 flights, and we will be able to carry this program forward for as long as it may be useful.

Mr. Speaker: There are a number of supplementary questions on this subject. The Chair might recognize the hon. member for Assiniboia and then the hon. member for Bellechasse before returning to the several members who have questions to raise on this point.

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GRAIN**WHEAT—SUGGESTED CHANGE IN CROP YEAR TO EQUALIZE PAYMENTS TO FARMERS WHO MADE EARLY DELIVERIES**

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice who is in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. In view of the fact that many smaller producers delivered their grain during the old crop year in June and July in order to meet financial obligations and debts and therefore lost out on the announcement regarding new prices on July 31 or August 1 for the new crop year, would the minister inform the House whether the government is considering making an equalization payment from the new pool account so as to assist those farmers who took a beating as a result of the new prices?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): No, Mr. Speaker. The ordinary year end of the pool is July 31, and farmers are fairly well aware of that fact. The fact is that some farmers realized that there was a possibility of a higher price and held their grain for a period or put it in storage for a period to sell to the new pool. I see no easy way of attempting to change the year end for pooling purposes in order to amalgamate part or all of two pools.

Mr. Knight: In view of the fact the government threw the quotas wide open and requested the farmers to deliver grain in the dying days of the old crop year and smaller farmers had to take payments to meet their debts, thus taking a beating as a result of the situation, would the minister inform the House whether the government has instructed the Wheat Board to examine the possibility of backdating the new crop year to July 15 or July 1?

[Mr. Marchand (Langelier).]

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I should say, first of all, to the hon. member for Assiniboia that the opening of quotas is a function of the Canadian Wheat Board, not of the government. I think the hon. member would find it very difficult to draw one particular line and then not begin to draw a second one for those people who delivered their grain in the previous two week period. That is why I suggest that the alternative of somehow amalgamating the two would have the effect of creating what might be considered to be far more difficulties than it was set up to cure.

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● (1540)

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE**APPLICATION OF NEW FEED GRAIN POLICY—EFFECT ON EASTERN PRODUCERS**

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture.

Can he tell the House whether the new feed grains policy announced on September 14, 1973 has been applied so far, and what are the results in connection with the claims of eastern producers?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the feed grain policy has been implemented in stages as the mechanics became available. The hon. member is, no doubt, referring to the question of the actual pricing of feed grains, particularly barley, for the purpose of marketing in the east. I am informed that a price announcement by the Canadian Wheat Board is expected momentarily.

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TRANSPORT**NEWFOUNDLAND FERRY SERVICE—SUGGESTED REDUCTION IN FARES AND FREIGHT RATES**

Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to a question directed to the Minister of Transport by my colleague, the hon. member for St. John's East. In view of the fact that the 90 miles separating Newfoundland from the mainland of Canada are to us what the trans-Canada highway is to people in other parts of Canada, is the minister prepared to instruct this new organization to revise the fares and freight rates structure for moving people and goods across that 90 miles to make them consistent with the cost of travelling 90 miles on any portion of the trans-Canada highway?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, this problem of rates is being studied with the premiers of the Atlantic provinces. I met with them a few weeks ago. I intend to continue to study all these problems in an effort to find, hopefully, an acceptable solution.