

favour of that than holding back and splitting the present bill.

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AGRICULTURE

BEEF—REQUEST FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PROMISE TO BRING ABOUT EQUITY BETWEEN FREIGHT RATES ON DRESSED BEEF AND LIVE CATTLE

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the very serious difficulties facing the beef producers of western Canada, something which has undoubtedly been aggravated by the policies of the federal government, particularly discriminatory freight rates and the recent increase in freight rates, has the minister been carrying on discussions with his colleagues, the Minister of Transport and the minister in charge of the wheat board, to impress upon them the importance of reducing the freight rate inequities and the need to fulfill the commitment made by the minister in charge of the wheat board in providing a freight rate equalization program as part of the overall agreement of the feed grains policy?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept everything the hon. member has said. I hope he has observed the close proximity of the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Transport and the minister in charge of the wheat board. We are discussing these problems, as we said we would, and will continue to do so until we find a solution.

Mr. Mazankowski: Can the minister in charge of the wheat board inform the House when we may expect a fulfilment of the promise he made to the western provinces at the time the feed grains proposal was undertaken, as well as the promise made by the Minister of Transport last Friday, with regard to the freight rate equalization program which will have the effect of reducing freight rates for dressed beef vis-à-vis live beef?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, we made the commitment of equity in freight rates between grain and beef not just to the western provinces, but as part of our overall policy of providing fair treatment to different segments of agriculture in the various parts of this country. We remain committed to that. In the course of the discussion on the feed grains policy, so much attention was devoted to other and different aspects of the policy that we really did not have adequate discussion about the appropriate approach to take in relation to grain and meat rates. We therefore prolonged the period for this discussion. This has been going on and we will in due course be putting forward the specific proposals we have for bringing about equity with regard to these matters. I am glad to have the apparent support of the hon. member in seeing that this comes about.

Oral Questions

● (1510)

POTATOES—DIFFICULTIES FACING PRODUCERS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpèque): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a related question to the Minister of Agriculture. Have any communications been received from the potato growing industry in the maritime provinces with regard to the very dire straits that industry is in at present? This has been aggravated by the increased freight rates. Have communications been received either direct from industry or through the provincial governments of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have received representations from the Minister of Veterans Affairs who is from Prince Edward Island, as well as the minister of agriculture of Prince Edward Island with regard to the very low prices the potato growing industry is receiving at the present time on the Toronto and Montreal markets. My department has compiled a paper on the prices they are receiving. I think I can sum up the situation by saying this is one horrible way to market potatoes, ship them and hope someone will buy them. I suggest there should be a better way of marketing potatoes than that being done at the present time.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In order to avoid a repetition of a series of questions tomorrow in the House and, more particularly, to clear up matters for people outside the House, will the Minister of Finance agree to inform us now whether he will make a statement tomorrow on motions to clarify the purpose of the discussions he is having with various groups in the economy and outline to the House the particular proposals on which the government is making a commitment.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I raise the question of privilege with all the respect I owe the Chair. I understand that I sit at the far left, at the other end of the House, and that it is sometimes also difficult for the Chair to see a member from that distance, and for that member to ask a supplementary question, as is usually allowed other members.

Mr. Speaker, my question of privilege is the following: I asked a very serious question of the Solicitor General, a question which concerns all Canadians. I would have liked to ask him a supplementary. Unfortunately, I am quite sure that the Chair did not see me, and I did not have the opportunity to ask that supplementary question. So, with all due respect to the Chair, I would like to ask this same question tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Bellechasse is raising the question of privilege to be recognized for a supplementary question.

For a moment, the question was whether to recognize a second Social Creditor this afternoon. There were at that moment exactly four Social Credit members in the House.