

shall have to ask for a report from my colleague the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Senator Kenny: If I may, honourable senators, I would ask the Leader of the Government at the same time to inquire why Canada has not yet ratified this convention.

Senator Murray: I shall do so.

CBC

OMMISSION OF NEW BRUNSWICK FROM NATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Hon. L. Norbert Thériault: Honourable senators, following the statement made earlier by my colleague Senator Corbin, when he quoted the article concerning the CBC, I would ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate if he would be kind enough to check with whoever is responsible for the celebrations. I know that government cannot, and will not, dictate to the CBC what it should do, but surely in a case like this enquiries should be made as to how and why New Brunswick was the only province left out of that proposed telecast.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I saw the news report to which both Senator Corbin and Senator Thériault refer. Let me say that I share their dismay at this turn of events. I will certainly ask my colleague Mr. Perrin Beatty, who reports to Parliament for the CBC, to ask that corporation for an explanation of this matter.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

MARKETING OF GRAIN—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, my question to the minister has to do with the policy of the government regarding the Canadian Wheat Board. As the minister will know, this has been a very important instrument in western Canada for the orderly marketing of grain, and has been, for the prairie farmers in general, their very definite choice as a marketing system. Yet we find that, bit by bit, there seems to be an erosion of the board and of its maintenance.

Recently, new measures were announced to provide for the private export to the U.S. of Canadian grain, whereas previously all exports were by the Canadian Wheat Board. Recently, as well, because of budget cuts, apparently inspections of grain leaving the country by truck are being reduced or eliminated. That means that from now on there will be no control on Canadian trucks carrying grain into the United States. There has been a suspicion on the part of many Westerners since the implementation of the free trade agreement that the policy of the government was indeed under American pressure to let the Wheat Board disappear bit by bit.

Could the minister tell us clearly what the position of the government is? Is it supporting the Wheat Board, or does it want it, indeed, to disappear?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the latter part of the honourable senator's statement is one of these bogeys that arise from time to time in connection with criticism of the free trade agreement. As the Honourable Roy McLaren accurately predicted several years ago, the opposition would be blaming the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement for every sparrow that falls from the air.

The position of the government with regard to the Canadian Wheat Board has not changed. We support the Canadian Wheat Board. As for the background to the private exports recently authorized, I will ask my colleague Mr. Mayer, the minister responsible, for a statement on that matter, and I will bring it in in due course.

NATIONAL FINANCE

INCREASE IN DEFICIT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. H.A. Olson: Honourable senators, I hold in my hand a press release from the Minister of Finance giving the figures for the first three quarters of this present fiscal year, indicating that at the end of December—that is, after three quarters—the actual deficit was \$26.8 billion, or approximately \$8 billion higher than the year before.

Does that mean that we are heading for a \$40 billion deficit in total, when we get the fourth quarter, by following the pattern set for the first three quarters?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government): Not at all, honourable senators. My colleague the Minister of Finance forecast in his February budget that the deficit for fiscal 1991-92 would come in at \$30.5 billion. We have no reason to change that forecast.

Senator Olson: Was the forecast such that there was going to be an \$8 billion increase in this fiscal year over the last fiscal year, and, if so, is there going to be an improvement in the amount of \$7 billion or \$8 billion between January 1 and the end of March?

Senator Murray: Well, honourable senators, the numbers that count are the numbers for the full fiscal year, and the number at \$30.5 billion for 1991-92 would certainly not represent an \$8 billion increase over the figure for 1990-91.

CANADA POST

LITERACY OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE MAIL CARRIERS

Hon. Philippe Deane Gigantès: Honourable senators, I wonder if the Leader of the Government would be kind enough to ask the minister responsible for the Post Office if he could kindly intervene so that in the postal district J9H 5E1 in Quebec, when the private enterprise carrier hired to deliver the mail wants a day off, he or she will not have himself or herself replaced by someone who cannot read. I have been getting mail addressed to Mr. Joe Clark's daughter, and similar things have been happening elsewhere. We send it on unopened, of course. It would be nice, though, if you did point out that it is necessary to be able to read to perform that job.