

Oral Questions

industry in attempting to guarantee Canadians that their economy will be put first?

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, I am optimistic that our efforts will have the same results as the efforts of the Liberal party did in northern Ontario when the New Democratic Party was wiped out because they were not able to serve the interests of the Canadian people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORT

INQUIRY CONCERNING DECISION ON SALE OF NORDAIR

Mr. André Maltais (Manicouagan): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. It deals with the sale of Nordair. Can the Minister of Transport first tell the House what factors are now delaying a decision with regard to that file and, secondly, when does he intend to reach a final decision with regard to the effective sale of Nordair?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, we are now putting the final touch to the terms and conditions of sale; in a few days, these will be made known to one of the possible buyers and if the latter meets those conditions, he can then buy Nordair.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN IMPORTED SHEEP—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ERADICATE

Mr. Mel Gass (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture. It involves a serious problem regarding the importation of sheep into Canada. Documented cases indicated that sheep imported from Great Britain have been infected with highly infectious diseases, one being enzootic abortion and the other being pulmonary adenomatosis. During the three-year quarantine period the sheep were not checked for these diseases.

Can the minister assure this House that further importations will be checked more closely for these and other diseases that may be common only in their place of origin? For example, sheep are soon to be imported from France: will these sheep be checked more closely while in quarantine, or will some other infectious disease be confirmed after the sheep are dispersed to the public?

An hon. Member: He has pulled the wool over our eyes.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, that such a thing as the hon. member has described could happen is of great concern to my department. We regard

the Canadian quarantine system as the best in the world. However, that does not mean that it does not have some problems, or that it will not make mistakes. This problem which seems to exist in some of the flocks which have been imported has been double-checked. I am sure the hon. member is aware that the only way to check the sheep for disease is by slaughtering them.

Miss MacDonald: That is pretty final.

Mr. Whelan: The hon. member has also mentioned sheep which will be imported from France. Every precautionary measure known will be taken when these sheep are put into quarantine at the Grosse Isle quarantine station.

Mr. Gass: Madam Speaker, contrary to what is said, there is a way of checking for enzootic abortion, and it is not by slaughtering the ewe. It can be done by checking the foetus after it has been aborted. This method was not practiced during the three years of quarantine in Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton.

Is the minister considering compensating farmers who have purchased these diseased sheep from government-run importation groups for the purpose of improving their flocks? If so, what form will the compensation take?

Mr. Whelan: Madam Speaker, if proof can be shown that the problem was due to some neglect on the part of the officers in charge of the quarantine, then proper compensation will be made to the people who purchased these sheep. We value very highly the record which we have because, as I have said, it is one of the best records in the world. Because of our ability to provide disease-free sheep, we have a great export business.

What the hon. member has said about enzootic abortion is true, but I understand that it was not brought to the attention of our veterinarians, otherwise tests could have been carried out much sooner than they were.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

OPP INVESTIGATION INTO "OPERATION CHECKMATE"

Mr. David Smith (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, I direct my question to the Solicitor General. According to a report in *The Globe and Mail* last week, the attorney general of Ontario has alleged that the RCMP is withholding documentation requested by the Ontario Provincial Police in their investigation into Operation Checkmate. Will the minister advise the House if any documentation or information is being withheld and, if so, whether or not it will be released?

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Madam Speaker, I read the report in *The Globe and Mail* to which the hon. member has referred. I can assure the House that there is no foundation to the statements attributed to the attorney general of Ontario. Shortly after becoming Solicitor General, I offered to provide him and other attorneys general with all the infor-