

SIZE OF FEDERAL CONTRIBUTION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knows that the meeting of the western Premiers last May, followed by the meeting in August attended by all provincial Governments, asked for a minimum of a billion dollars new funding from the federal Government alone. My question to the Prime Minister now concerns the amount of money coming from the federal Government, not necessarily the details about how it is to be spent which could be sorted out Thursday, but is this a billion dollars of new federal funds that will go to prairie producers or will it be spread across the country? Or, is it old money?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think I already indicated to my hon. friend in a statement in the House on Friday that we would be meeting with the provinces in the shortest possible time to work out the best way of meeting these commitments that were raised, as I say, by the agricultural Ministers and have been the subject of discussion since. We will take whatever action to be helpful to the western farmers. They are going through, as I have indicated, through no fault of their own, a very difficult situation, and the Government of Canada, the Parliament of Canada, will help them out. The reason for the meeting on Thursday or Friday is to work out the modalities as to how best this can be done.

Mr. Broadbent: Working through the modalities of that answer takes some doing, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says he has answered the question. He has not told us if it is new money. He has not told us if it is going to prairie producers only. He has not answered the question at all.

Will the Prime Minister deal with those questions now because the producers all across Canada, and on the Prairies particularly, want to know where that money is coming from and how much. Since it took the Government 48 hours to make a decision that sent bankers a billion dollars, will he please make up his mind in no more than 48 hours about getting money to grain producers?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will respond to some of the points that have been raised by my hon. friend. He knows that they are quite unfair observations. I will tell him this. He is asking whether it is new money or old money. It will be new money and good money in the pockets of the farmers.

• (1425)

Oral Questions

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ORIENT

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It concerns the oriental trip and the butler and the maid. In reference to the trip, the Prime Minister is quoted as having said over the weekend "I didn't take the butler, I didn't take anybody", while Mr. Lortie, one of his aides, and Mr. Doucet both said that there were in fact such people. Could the Prime Minister clear up the butler mystery? Which version is the closest to being the correct one? Will we have to ask Mr. Doucet, Mr. Lortie, or the Prime Minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member has put his question.

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could assist the Hon. Member. I should like to advise him that what the Government does on prime ministerial travel is dictated in large measure by security requirements for our Prime Minister and his aides and for the people who meet with him. This is a fundamental requirement. What was done by the people referred to was pursuant to instructions and advice received from the security unit of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

BUTLER'S DUTIES

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, that raises an interesting question. If the RCMP is paid to be watching the luggage and, according to Mr. Doucet, the butler is watching the RCMP, then who is watching the butler? Will we have to call the butler before the Bar of the House to find out?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I can only tell the Hon. Member, as the Solicitor General of the Government, that the RCMP, which is under my control, insists upon strict adherence to all security precautions and requirements on trips of an extensive nature that the Prime Minister takes.

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AGRICULTURE

ASSISTANCE FOR GRAIN PRODUCERS

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Saskatchewan farmers are quite concerned. They want to know what type of future they are facing, and the types of answers which they are getting from the Prime Minister and the Government are just creating further confusion. My question requires a simple yes