

Oral Questions

populaire is an agent of the Crown. I would like the Hon. Member to substantiate those charges, and I would be very happy to provide information which will prove to him that Quebecers are winners, not losers, in S-31.

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CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

PRICING AND MOVEMENT OF FEED GRAINS

Mr. Stan Schellenberger (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport who answers for the Wheat Board. Presently there is complete chaos in the pricing and movement of feed grains in western Canada because of barley quota manipulation, a large differentiation in the barley and other bases, and a low initial board price for barley and other feed grains. Will the Minister immediately cause an investigation to take place to eliminate the reasons for this totally unacceptable situation?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, again I think it would be prudent to take the description of chaos by the Hon. Member with some degree of skepticism. We are examining the question. I think he would recognize that the Government did advance payments on feed grains, particularly barley, because of the substantial increase in world prices of some 30 odd per cent over the last two or three months. We are providing a much stronger cash flow to the farmers in this area. If, however, he has some evidence of problems he is encountering in his area, I would certainly be very glad to look into it.

INITIAL GRAIN PRICES

Mr. Stan Schellenberger (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, the off board quota is traditionally seven bushels higher than the board quota, and those quotas are now the same. The price of board grain is \$15 lower than off board grain. Farmers are sitting on their grain, the Wheat Board does not have sufficient quantities to deliver for export, and barley sales are being deferred. While the Minister is partying over the death of the Crow tonight, will he look at immediately increasing the initial prices for board grain, and also ask the Wheat Board to increase the off board quota so that some semblance of a system can be put back in place in the West?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, when we honour this evening the proclamation of the railway expansion act which will bring major benefits to western Canada, we will also give some time to consideration of the situation in the feed grain area. As the Hon. Member knows, we have had a very volatile market in feed grains over the past two or three months, which has caused some of the disparities he mentioned. We are attempting to look at it, and I would have to do this in consultation with my colleague, the Minister of State. We will undertake those discussions and try to have a report back to this House as soon as possible.

NATIONAL REVENUE

DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO MUNICIPAL DATA BANKS

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board who has the responsibility for regulations safeguarding the privacy of Canadians. Was his Parliamentary Secretary, the Hon. Member for Kitchener, speaking on behalf of the President of the Treasury Board in an interview with the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, in which he condemned the attempt by the Department of Revenue to plug into municipal data banks and said he was "convinced that the request was inappropriate and I am making representations to ensure that similar requests are not made in future of Kitchener or any other municipality"? Was his Parliamentary Secretary speaking for the President of the Treasury Board?

Hon. Herb Gray (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, my Parliamentary Secretary was speaking in his capacity as Member for Kitchener. In that capacity he was and is doing a very good job for his constituents.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER END PRACTICE

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, perhaps we will see how effective he is. The Hon. Member said that, in addition to lobbying the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Justice, he sent a letter to the Minister of National Revenue condemning this and asking for a change. He also gave an interview in which he said this is not the way things are done in a parliamentary democracy.

In light of the growing opposition, both within his own Caucus and among Canadians as a whole, to this outrageous request, is the Minister of National Revenue now prepared to put an end to this odious practice, to admit the request should never have been made to the City of Kitchener, and give a guarantee to Canadians that similar requests will not be made to other municipalities, as has been suggested by the Hon. Member for Kitchener?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I believe that this whole question should be clarified. The Hon. Member and everyone else in this House will recall that when I replied to his question last week, I did state that it was not our practice to ask for all the information and data stored in the data banks of a city or municipality. What we wanted to get was specific data concerning certain information which in any case are available to the public, and this is what we are doing. If the letter sent by a departmental official to the City of Kitchener gave the impression that something else was required, it is a wrong impression which does not reflect the policy of the Department.