

Oral Questions

ENERGY

OIL—POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENT ON WORLD PRICE

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question along the lines of the questions asked by the hon. member for Don Valley and the hon. member for Edmonton West of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. At the world conference was price discussed, was it negotiated, and was there any agreement made at that conference as to the price of crude petroleum with reference to trade throughout the world?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, there was a reference to the fact that the OPEC nations will be meeting at Libreville in Gabon during the course of this current month to decide on the pricing of petroleum in the world market after September 30 next. There was no agreement on an appropriate price between the consumer states who participate in the IEA on this question. There was some reference by Secretary Kissinger to the concept of a minimum guaranteed price in world marketing, but again there was no extensive discussion of this question and no agreement.

Mr. Woolliams: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Was the price that was discussed and which negotiations centred around the price of \$8.50 a barrel?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, the price that was referred to was the price that would be set by the OPEC nations at their meeting in Gabon, and presumably would be a price increase over the current level of around \$11 to \$12 per barrel. There was no discussion of specific figures in regard to a minimum guaranteed price.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

POTATOES—DATE OF COMPLETION OF ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture.

Can he tell us today when the Agricultural Stabilization Board intends to end the program announced on April 1, which aims at assisting, and effectively assists, eastern potato producers, since, on the one hand, the existing terminology is relatively vague in that respect, and that, on the other hand, farmers would like to know the precise intentions of the government.

[English]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, at the end of the crop year, which normally is the end of June.

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

TRANSPORT

CROWSNEST PASS RATES—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE NO ALTERATION

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Transport. In view of the number of answers that have been given of a rather fuzzy nature to the simple question whether or not the government intends in the new Transportation Act to alter, amend or in any way abridge the Crowsnest Pass rates on grain, would the minister give me the assurance that such course will not be followed?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I hope that very soon I will produce this new policy, and I can say to the right hon. gentleman that nothing changes anything about the Crowsnest Pass rates.

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POST OFFICE

THREATENED STRIKE BY UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS—APPOINTMENT OF CONCILIATOR

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General. Now that the national president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers has consigned the public to the nether regions if they do not agree with the union's posture in current bargaining, can the Postmaster General give assurance that the public will be saved from this fate by the conciliation proceedings that are now getting underway?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, there is no particular reason why there should be a postal strike; the climate has improved tremendously, I think. I am sure the hon. gentleman would be the first who would be pleased to know that the backlog of 25 million pieces of mail in Montreal has been completely eradicated and there is no longer a backlog.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mackasey: There is still about a week's delay in the parcels section but that should be cleaned up soon. We have agreed to a conciliation officer, and I think that if the president's freeze, shall I say, on the exchange of polite insults is maintained and both sides get down to bargaining before a competent conciliation officer, there is no reason why we should not arrive at a good collective agreement within the month.

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TRANSPORT

DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW POLICY

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I put a question to the Minister of Transport who referred to his new policy coming out soon. Will it be coming out in the month of June, or if it is not coming out in the month of June will it be coming out before we recess, hopefully early in July?