

Oral Questions

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with the need to ensure that there is no abuse of the system by anyone who is trying to provide false advice to individuals wishing to come to Canada. I also welcome the Hon. Member's sense of urgency with respect to bringing in a new refugee determination system. I am sure we will have his support, and the support of members of his Party for whom I take it he speaks, when we introduce that new refugee determination system very shortly.

Ms. Copps: I thought you were the Minister.

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AGRICULTURE**GRAIN PRICES—REQUEST FOR DEFICIENCY PAYMENTS**

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. This is the time of year when both farmers and lenders assess the future viability of farms. Given the 20 per cent drop in initial prices and the scary parts of the Nielsen task force report regarding future commitment of funding by the Government, will the Minister make a clear statement today the Government's intention with respect to deficiency payments? Will the Government make up the difference between world price and the losses with which farmers have to deal, or will it not?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that the reports of the task force have all been referred to the appropriate committees for consideration. Again I say that we have shown support for agriculture, particularly western agriculture, in the past year. The Prime Minister said this morning that we plan to make an announcement on Monday with respect to the size of the interim payment under the Western Grain Stabilization Act. When the Hon. Member hears that announcement I am sure that, as a farmer, he will welcome the news.

STABILIZATION FUND

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister assure the bankers and the farmers that when the stabilization fund is depleted on Monday the Government will continue its legislative commitment to keep that fund full when future calls come against it? Will he also assure us that cash advances will not be subject to interest, as was proposed by the Nielsen task force?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Western Grain Stabilization Act, and since the Hon. Member has served as agriculture critic for his Party, he should know that part of the legislation states that the federal Government is responsible for making up the deficit.

Mr. Althouse: So does it say that they should have interest-free cash advances; but you are talking about doing away with them.

Mr. Mayer: The Hon. Member should also know that there was a time, I guess about two years ago, when that fund contained \$1 billion. If it is fair to run a surplus then I think it is reasonable for farmers and for Government to expect that it can run a deficit. So there is no problem with making payments under the Western Grain Stabilization Act, even if the fund goes into a deficit position, Mr. Speaker.

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[Translation]

AIRPORTS**MIRABEL AND DORVAL—BURNS AGENCY CONTRACT—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Argenteuil—Papineau): My question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Further to recent events at the airports at Mirabel and Dorval which demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the security firm responsible for screening baggage, does the Minister intend to cancel the Burns contract and ask for another public tender?

[English]

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the Minister's absence. He had to leave to catch a flight—a public flight I might add?—to Vancouver.

I indicate to the Hon. Member that the contracts are between the carriers and the security firms. The involvement of the Government is simply in relation to standards for security. Finally, I would like to indicate that on Monday morning the Minister will be meeting with the security firms, the carriers, and the unions involved.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE**MINOR WAR VESSELS PROCUREMENT PROGRAM**

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Associate Minister of National Defence. Recently, in Halifax, he stated that the Government was considering a \$100 million purchase of vessels for the Naval Reserve. In view of the fact that there is high unemployment among shipbuilders in the Atlantic area, British Columbia, and Quebec, why would the Minister want to use \$100 million of Government money to purchase ships offshore for the Canadian Armed Forces?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Associate Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to