

summer by the previous Government to bring in advance payments under the Western Grain Stabilization Fund so that some \$500 million of cash flow would be in the hands of farmers to meet a very serious problem before the change of the fiscal year? This is something which western farmers have been expecting and planning for, Mr. Speaker. We would hope the Minister of Agriculture will prevail upon his colleagues so that we could have that Bill in the House right away.

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I want to utilize this opportunity to thank the Hon. Member for his congratulatory messages and remarks. Indeed, I congratulate him on his electoral success.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Wise:** All my colleagues may not agree.

● (1440)

Indeed, I think that he can take some satisfaction from the fact that the agricultural industry was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. It was selected as one of our resource industries which we should make every effort to strengthen and to revitalize.

With reference to the Hon. Member's question drawing our attention to the very serious drought conditions in western Canada, we are very much aware of them. Indeed, one of my first trips after being sworn in as Minister of Agriculture was to Regina where I sat down with my provincial counterparts, along with my colleagues, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of State in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. An agreement between the federal Government and the provinces, to the extent of \$60 million, was signed. We have not ignored the drought conditions in western Canada. We have addressed this as well as we can, given our limited financial resources.

#### POSSIBLE CONTENT OF ECONOMIC STATEMENT

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. We on this side of the House are, of course, very pleased that the Minister signed an agreement that we negotiated. That shows some good sense that other Ministers have not shown in some of the other programs.

I would point out that the Minister has not answered the question as to whether they intend to bring in changes to the stabilization fund so that the farmers will have cash. I would ask here and now today, in order to erase any uncertainty, that he repudiate the statements made by officials of his Department which suggest that in tomorrow's statement there will be an elimination of many important programs for farmers in western Canada which would cause their present very serious condition to deteriorate substantially.

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, in responding to the Hon. Member's second and third questions, I would indicate to him that on Friday, I believe, we released the final payment in the amount of \$123 million. With reference

#### Oral Questions

to the possibility of providing an initial payment for 1985, I can assure him that my colleagues in Cabinet, and my colleagues from western Canada, are presently discussing that possibility.

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#### INDUSTRY

##### PLACEMENT OF CNR STEEL RAIL ORDER

**Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Rodriguez:** If you are not careful, you will get the previous Member back.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Rodriguez:** My question is for the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. It was recently reported in *The Toronto Star* that the CNR will be cutting some \$15 million worth of steel rail orders from Algoma Steel and transferring that to Sydney Steel Corporation. Keeping in mind that the unemployment rate in Sault Ste. Marie is far in excess of the national rate, unofficially 20 per cent, can the Minister guarantee the people of Sault Ste. Marie, and this House, that the old Liberal shell game of shifting jobs from one regionally deprived area of the country to the other is no longer in vogue, and that in fact that \$15 million order will be placed with Algoma Steel?

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. I welcome him back to the House.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Stevens:** As the Hon. Member knows, the transaction that he is referring to involves a Crown corporation. I would advise him, though, that certain of those transactions are under review. I can assure him that the concern of many in Sault Ste. Marie and in other areas in Canada has been brought to our attention. We will do our level best to ensure that there will be no adverse fallout from any such transaction such as that referred to by the Hon. Member.

#### REQUEST THAT MINISTER REVIEW DECISION

**Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the same Minister. There are two points. First, the Nova Scotia election is over.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Rodriguez:** The applause, I presume, was for Alexa McDonough, the Leader of the New Democrats in Nova Scotia.