

Oral Questions

based on the best and most factual information possible. We will continue to maintain that position.

PUBLICATIONS POLICY

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, will the Parliamentary Secretary make representations to his Minister to convince him to lift this policy of muzzling Environment Canada scientists, and allow the Department to publish and distribute its own publications?

Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, if the Member for Davenport, who is the Liberal critic, will look at his guidelines governing the activities of civil servants under his jurisdiction when he was Minister of the Environment, he will understand that this Government and this Minister are acting in precisely the same way and that we are ensuring that public information is made available through our bureaucracy in the most factual and responsible way possible.

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[Translation]

REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

POSSIBILITY OF PERMANENT LAY-OFFS FOR 167 EMPLOYEES OF NORTHERN TELECOM AT AYLMEYER, P.Q.—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion concerning the permanent lay-off this coming Saturday of 167 employees at the Northern Telecom plant in Aylmer. Is the Government pleased to accept that a large Canadian corporation should lay off people right here in Aylmer while at the same time transferring their jobs to the twin plant in Georgia, U.S.A.? Or is the Government ready to step in to ensure that Canadian workers can continue to manufacture in Canada products that were developed in Canada?

[English]

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I can only assure the Hon. Member that I will take his question as notice and this afternoon I will check into the circumstances to which he has referred.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER MEET UNION REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, the union representing the workers has tried without success to arrange a meeting with the Minister through the Member for Gatineau and the Minister's office. Will he agree to meet with the representatives of these workers before the lay-offs take place on May 3, particularly when 450 jobs have been lost in the Aylmer plant in the course of the last year—more than the Gulf refinery?

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, as I said in response to the Hon. Member's first question, I will look into this matter this afternoon.

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AGRICULTURE

UNITED STATES FARM BILL—CANADIAN REPRESENTATIONS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. The Export Enhancement Program under the U.S. Farm Bill has been used to take away sales of Canadian wheat and other products to Syria, Algeria, and potentially other places very soon. The U.S. Farm Bill could be described as a very well orchestrated attempt at intimidating us before the free trade negotiations commence. What representations, if any, has the Minister made to the United States Government in the last week or two to ensure that these kinds of predatory practices are never repeated for the duration of this unfortunate U.S. Farm Bill?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member raises a serious matter. He should know that we have raised this question with the Americans not only in the last couple of weeks but as long ago as last June when the BICEP program was first announced. We sought and received assurances from the Americans at that time that they would not target the BICEP program at Canadian markets.

The Hon. Member talks about Algeria. He should know that over the past 10 years we have sold varying amounts of grain to Algeria; from 335 million tonnes in 1978-79 to as much as 813 million tonnes in 1983-84. The amount we have sold to Algeria has fluctuated, depending on the year and how they were buying, without the BICEP program being in effect.

EFFECT ON CANADA

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): If Canada was not targeted as one of the so-called offenders against which the U.S. Farm Bill would retaliate, will the Minister indicate what caused the Americans to change their minds and retaliate by using these predatory practices against Canada? What is it that changed the minds of the Americans?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, I am not so sure that the Americans have changed their minds. The Hon. Member should know that last year the Canadian Wheat Board sold grain to over 60 countries. This year, for the first time, we are selling some feed wheat to South Korea which has traditionally been an American market.

If the Hon. Member were to balance his concern about our markets, in my opinion the European Community is the main