

Oral Questions

ville. I think the minister indicated, if I understood him correctly, that there would be no stabilization program aimed at assisting cow-calf producers in January, 1976. Could the minister clarify this answer in the light of his statement of November 26, which can be found on page 9462, of *Hansard* in which the minister indicated that he and his deputy minister and their provincial counterparts would be meeting to work out a proper program to start, I think, in January, 1976. Has the minister changed his mind? Is anything going on? Or does he intend to allow the situation to deteriorate to the extent that the cow-calf producers will all go broke?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is reading something which I do not have in front of me at the present time. I do not believe I specifically said anything about a cow-calf program on November 26. I said we were working on a program which we were going to develop for the calendar year from January 1 to the end of December, 1976. It doesn't have to start on January 1. The announcement can be made at any time, for example, in the middle of the year. Meetings are still taking place. There are ongoing meetings between provincial deputy ministers, my deputy minister and officials in my department, trying to work out suitable programs. If we can decide on a proper program for beef producers I hope it will be announced as soon as possible.

Mr. Mazankowski: Is the minister saying he is not considering a specific cow-calf program under the provisions of the Agricultural Stabilization Act? Yes or no.

Mr. Whelan: There is nothing in the act that specifically says there has to be a program for cow-calf operators. The reference is to cattle and the hon. member knows that we follow the act and we have not changed it. And we are not going to change it until we can work out a proper program, because there has been too much disunity among beef producers in the country about what they want done and what they do not want done. Not all the provinces are unanimous about what should or should not be done.

Mr. Mazankowski: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I simply ask the minister, is the answer yes or no? From the language he used I take it the answer is no, and that he is not considering a program for the cow-calf producers of this country.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows we have considered a cow-calf program in the hope some kind of program beneficial to cow-calf producers or beef producers in total can be worked out. That is what we want, if it can be a national program. Of course, it must be done with the co-operation of the provinces and the producers.

PERIOD TO BE COVERED BY COW-CALF STABILIZATION PROGRAM

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): The minister referred to January, 1976 as the starting date and then said he did not know whether he could make the announcement as soon as that. Regardless of when the announcement is made, can he assure the House that if such a program comes into effect, it will be retroactive to the beginning of the year?

[Mr. Mazankowski.]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, some of the programs we have are sometimes not announced until the end of the crop year. I have met with producers, as recently as yesterday, who suggested we do not announce stabilization programs until the crop year ends. But we have a formula already worked out for them. They were of the opinion it might have an effect on their market. I said that if we did have a program it would be for the calendar year, January, 1976 to the end of December, 1976.

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[Translation]

OLYMPIC GAMES

PROPOSED MEETING WITH QUEBEC TO AVOID FAILURE

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

Following the wish expressed by International Olympic Committee Chairman Lord Killanin that provincial and federal authorities in Canada join their efforts to ensure that the facilities for the Olympic Games in Montreal be ready in time, could the Prime Minister tell the House whether he would agree to meet the Quebec authorities to determine what joint action could be taken to guarantee the success of the games, because failure to hold them could tarnish the image of our country?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I did not read the international chairman's statement. If he had proposals to put to the government of Canada, I suppose he would know to reach this government. As regards the rest of the question, we have not received from the government of Quebec any request for a meeting on that particular subject.

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[English]

POST OFFICE

ALLEGATION MANAGEMENT LEAKED TERMS OF SETTLEMENT—POSSIBILITY OF INVESTIGATION

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I would like to direct a question to the Postmaster General, Mr. Speaker. In the light of allegations by CUPW that Post Office officials conspired with local union leaders in Toronto and other places to undermine the collective bargaining process, will the Postmaster General tell the House if the Deputy Postmaster General or anyone else released details of the government's offer to anyone other than the union negotiating team, and if an investigation into the allegation is proposed?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Postmaster General): I think any investigation should be made by CUPW and their own local officials rather than by the Post Office, in connection with any contact we may or may not have had with members of the CUPW other than the negotiating team. I am not aware of any direct contact at all with any president of any local of CUPW.