

go into Ontario. This announcement will be made to enable those who are not growing white beans or some of the other crops, to plant.

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WESTERN GRAIN TRANSPORTATION ACT

RATES CHARGED ON CONTAINER SHIPMENTS OF ALFALFA PELLETS

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. It is in regard to the application of the new freight rates for grain handling and so on. Agricultural products such as alfalfa, and more specifically meal, pellets and cubes, were to be eligible for the new rates. Is the Minister aware of the fact that both railways are now charging the full commercial rates for shipments of containers of the products of agriculture from western Canada to Vancouver for direct shipment overseas to Japan? Will he indicate what he might do about that?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation to the Member for Medicine Hat for having drawn the problem to my attention earlier. We have begun to look into it. There is no question that the inclusion of alfalfa pellets was part of the rate structure and they are eligible for the new rate under the Western Grain Transportation Act. The initial response I get from the railways is that the containerization does create an ambiguity in the application of those regulations. I have instructed our officials to meet with the railways to clear up that ambiguity so that we will not have any further confusion in that area. I hope that we will be able to clear up the matter for the producers in the Hon. Member's area in the beginning of next week.

RAILWAYS' INTERPRETATION OF ACT'S PROVISIONS

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister, on the same subject. I appreciate the nature of his comment. In light of Article 50 in the new legislation and the authority of the Canadian Transport Commission with respect to that, is the Minister aware that both railways are assuming that, in order to qualify for that new rate, agricultural products have to be shipped by boxcars or hopper cars, in other words, excluding containers? I would appreciate whether that could be investigated in the whole question as well.

● (1150)

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member brings up a very useful and important point. We will use that as a reference as part of our discussions with the railways. I think it does point out the necessity to implement quickly the practical parts of the legislation, which are the establishment of the office of the Grain Administrator and the Senior Grain Transportation

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Committee so that many of these issues can be worked out through that particular mechanism. I hope to be in a position within the matter of a week or ten days to move forward on those very important developments. But I do thank the Hon. Member for bringing these matters to my attention. As I said, we will have them cleared up by next week.

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FISHERIES

IMPACT OF HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT ON BRITISH COLUMBIA FISHERY

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. He knows that yesterday Alcan applied to proceed with its Kemano II Project. This will take, as the Minister knows, in total 88 per cent of the water out of the Nechako river system. I am sure the Minister is also aware that British Columbia has either already flooded, or has under reserve flooding, an area roughly the size of Prince Edward Island. Since the Minister's own Department and the International Pacific Salmon Fisheries Commission have expressed alarm and deep concern over the Alcan proposal, would the Minister tell members of this House, British Columbia sports fishermen, native food fishermen and commercial fishermen, what use his fleet restructuring plan, his buy-back plan, and everything else are, if he is going to allow an unnecessary hydroelectric project to proceed in British Columbia?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reassure the Hon. Member that no decision has been made about this project, and one will not be made until hearings scheduled by the Utilities Commission have been held. As you know, the Department issued and made public on January 5 several scenarios about this project, and as far as my Department is concerned we are going to wait until a full hearing has been held.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Minister is aware that the proposed B.C. Utilities Commission hearings are nothing more than a kangaroo court, rubber-stamp process. There is no funding for intervenors. There is no cross-examination, and there are no subpoena powers. I would invite the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to speak to the former Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in terms of the trouble that Minister got the Amax Corporation into by not having—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would the Hon. Member please ask his question?

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. Will he and his Government show some backbone on a project that will affect the Fraser river and the Skeena river system, and have a full public inquiry process that will allow experts on