

came through with a big grant. A grant has already been given to the other large food processing company there. Another one will be available shortly. There is only one thing we have not signed, and that is an agreement on agricultural development for Nova Scotia. I am looking forward to that very shortly.

I agree to some extent with the hon. member's last statement about prairie farm rehabilitation, PFRA, coming under the Department of Agriculture but, if it does, it should be for all Canada because it is one of the best programs any government in the whole world has ever developed.

#### ABSENCE OF AGREEMENT

**Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova):** Madam Speaker, I do not know about the whole world, but I would like to follow this up with the minister briefly and remind him that we talked about this once before. He knows there are problems because of the absence of a sub-agreement, which used to be under the regular DREE program. When will the minister be able to tell the House whether he will take this initiative and take this very good PFRA program, which is highly respected in western Canada, and combine it with some scheme like the former Maritime Marshland Rehabilitation Act and apply it right across the country for the benefit of the agricultural industry? If this initiative—which I think he will agree is a good one—is to be taken, when will he give us some indication of that?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, as I have said in this House before, this is a joint agreement. The province of Nova Scotia should give agriculture the priority it needs in relation to cost-sharing programs. Nova Scotia gives agriculture a number three rating instead of number one, which I give to agriculture in Nova Scotia. That has made it more difficult to go ahead with that program. If the hon. member can persuade Premier Buchanan of Nova Scotia to give agriculture a number one rating in that province, I am sure I will have less difficulty here.

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#### THE CHARTER OF RIGHTS

##### APPLICATION TO RETIREMENT AGE FOR POSTMASTERS

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The proclamation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for Canadians was signed by Her Majesty here last month. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms prohibits discrimination on the basis of age. Can the minister say if this will remove the requirement that postmasters must retire at age 65?

[Translation]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, this is a very interesting point which will certainly be looked into by my colleague, the

President of the Treasury Board, not only as it concerns employees of a Crown corporation such as the Canada Post Corporation but also as it applies to government employees in general.

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[English]

#### RAILWAYS

##### CROWSNEST PASS RATE—STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Reports from the prairies last week indicate that the draft report from Dr. Gilson is not being well received by all participants in the negotiations on the Crow rate. Is the minister still using the yardstick of consensus to measure the success or failure of these negotiations and, if he is, how does he propose to deal with the situation whereby some participants insist on payments being made directly to the railways while others insist that they be made directly to the farmers?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, nobody thought that this Gilson exercise would be easy, so when my hon. friend says there are still some items on which there is not yet a consensus, it is no surprise to me or to anyone else. However, the reports which have come out of the meetings have been generally quite optimistic. There has been agreement on a number of non-monetary items. I could list them, but I prefer not to pre-empt the report. It was my impression that some compromises were reached—in any event, were worked hard at—in terms of deciding who should be paid, the farmers or the railways. Some consensus was developing in that respect, and there are still a few days to go, and hopefully all these matters will be resolved.

##### PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL RATES FOR EQUAL DISTANCE

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre):** Madam Speaker, another item on the agenda was the question of equal rates for equal distance which, I understand from comments in the House, will be continued, unless the farmers insist otherwise. Is that still the stance of the government? Will equal rates for equal distance continue, and what kinds of conditions would have to prevail before that stance is changed?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, the information I have is that indeed the principle of equal rates for equal distance will be maintained, but efforts are being made to try to find some incentive rate which will be acceptable to the agricultural community. There are some ideas which have been floated around—my friend is aware of them—respecting rates which would be beneficial for a period of time to help the development of processing, for example, in the west, and I am sure my hon. friend would agree that that would be desirable.