

Oral Questions

the government prepared to entertain an appeal to itself, in the case where it is a party to the original agreement?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the question is not hypothetical, it probably has reference to the white paper and the commission as it now exists and will exist under the legislation. This is a matter of law. The hon. member is able to read the white paper; he knows the procedure. We have always stated that the government would negotiate in good faith with its employees, including the postal workers, would reach a settlement which we would interpret to be within the guidelines, but that the Anti-Inflation Board has a duty to perform. As I indicated, I know that the Anti-Inflation Board is making certain contacts, at least with this party. That is the status of the situation now.

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AGRICULTURE**DESTINATION OF BUCKWHEAT IMPORTED FROM UNITED STATES BY CARGILL—POSSIBILITY OF EXPORT TO JAPAN**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture, of which I gave him notice. Would the minister inform the House of the final destination of some two million pounds of buckwheat imported from North Dakota and Minnesota to Manitoba in October, 1975, by Cargill Limited and other grain companies, and can he inform the House what amounts, if any, were imported in November?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it is a requirement under the Canada Grains Act for licensed elevators which receive foreign grain to report these receipts to the Canadian Grain Commission. I have asked the commission to check into this matter and when I have their report I will be pleased to forward information to the hon. member.

An hon. Member: Who wrote that, Gene?

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I thought I was the one who was relatively uninformed on agricultural matters.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: May I ask my colleague from an automotive city the following supplementary? Can the minister tell the House if this buckwheat—and would he please check this—is being transported under statutory grain rates through Canada for re-export to Japan via Vancouver, a practice which I am sure the minister well knows would be a clear violation of Canadian law?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member sent the question to my office at one o'clock. I was not aware of it until just before entering the House because I was at a meeting until two o'clock. We are already asking for this information and will forward it to the hon. member as soon as it is available. As Minister of Agriculture, I certainly do not want anything done that is contrary to our law.

[Mr. Stanfield.]

LICENCES GRANTED FOR STORAGE OF UNITED STATES BUCKWHEAT

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Will the minister further advise the House or investigate whether the Canadian Grain Commission has received requests for and/or granted any licence to Cargill or other United States companies to allow U.S. buckwheat to be stored in Canadian elevators, as required under the Canada Grains Act? If so, will he tell us the names of those companies?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, as far as I am concerned, all the information that the Canadian Grain Commission has concerning the use of warehouse facilities, elevator facilities and so on is public information. This is done from time to time. It is all kept according to the law by the Canadian Grain Commission. I will make the information available to the hon. member or the House.

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[Translation]

FINANCE**PROPOSAL THAT GOVERNMENT EXTEND INTEREST-FREE LOANS**

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I directed a question to the Minister of Finance and it was referred to the Prime Minister. The latter answered as follows:

—there are no such things as interest-free loans. When we grant loans, the government itself has to borrow the money from the taxpayers. If the interest is not paid by the beneficiary, it is paid by the taxpayers generally.

In answer to a supplementary, the Prime Minister gave as example the last borrowing through the Canada saving bonds for which the government pays interest of about 9¼ per cent to lend that money interest-free to foreign countries. This answer puzzled me and to use the terms—

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member want to ask a question?

Mr. Matte: I am coming to my question, Mr. Speaker; here it is: Would the Prime Minister advise the House whether interest-free loans to foreign countries are made with money obtained through Canada saving bonds or with money generated by credit making?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the money we lend to developing countries comes to them as a sort of credit. This is only possible if the government itself is in a position to extend credit. This credit in turn depends on the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Canadian government as well as on the monetary system itself. As I said, this monetary system can operate only if the government makes sure that all loans yield interest. With certain types of loans, it frequently happens that taxpayers instead of the borrower must pay the interest. Anyway, when the government must borrow money for its own use, it must pay interest, and this is why I say that interest-free loans do not exist. There are loans on which the interest is paid either by the borrower or the government, that is to say, the taxpayers.