

GRAIN

APPOINTMENT OF GRAIN TRANSPORTATION CO-ORDINATOR—
DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, I also have a question directed to the Minister of Transport which is of considerable importance to western Canadians. The minister will recall that the position of grain transportation co-ordinator has now been vacant for almost a year since the resignation of Dr. Hugh Horner. Mr. Doug Radke has filled that position on an interim basis. People in western Canada are wondering when an announcement will be made with respect to a permanent replacement in that position. I wonder if the minister will indicate when he will be in a position to announce the appointment of a new grain transportation co-ordinator.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, those who wonder will not have to wonder very long.

REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE ANNOUNCEMENT

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, the minister's idea of a short period of time is since October last. Short periods of time in the west are not completely uncertain. I would like to ask the minister whether he is aware of the fact that if we get a few more rains in western Canada we face the prospect of a very major grain crop in western Canada this year, which would apply an extreme pressure in respect to the transportation of grain, which is very important factor for all of Canada. I want to ask the minister if he will not give consideration to making this announcement immediately, and allow us to make plans with respect to transportation of grain on an export basis.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I can only say that I will hurry.

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TEXTILES AND CLOTHING

FORECASTED INCREASE IN IMPORTS

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Madam Speaker, my question, directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, relates to a statement made last month regarding the five-year program for the Canadian textile and clothing industries. The minister will know that the government-appointed textile and clothing board, having completed the most extensive examination of those industries ever undertaken, urged the continuance of the current import levels through 1990 as its principal recommendation. Despite this, as I read the minister's statement, it expressly anticipates significantly higher imports of foreign textiles and clothing. I therefore ask the minister can he indicate to the House his estimate of the percentage increase of these imports by the end of the five-year program period?

Oral Questions

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, this is something under negotiation with the 16 exporting countries with which we have agreements; but I did say that we expected that the basis for these agreements would be the 1979 levels, which, I think, provides an approach which respects both the needs of Canadian producers and Canadian consumers.

PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRY

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Again, if I read the statement correctly, the minister's main thrust seems to be to provide for communities and workers who will no longer be engaged in the textile and clothing industries by the end of the five-year period, because the statement includes replacement of plants, job search, monitoring, early retirement benefits, and so on. This seems to anticipate a rather massive reduction in the number of textile and clothing workers. If I am incorrect, I wish the minister would correct me. However, of the current 189,000 jobs now in those textile and clothing industries, what percentage or number does the minister and his department anticipate will exist at the end of the five-year period?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend has neglected to mention that another major element of the adjustment program I announced along with my colleague, the Minister of Regional and Economic Expansion some weeks ago, was a program to assist in the modernization of the textile and clothing industry, and the firms in it, no matter where they are located. We believe that there is a tremendous potential for modernization so that we can be more competitive in both domestic and world terms. Therefore we do not anticipate a massive reduction in employment—

Mr. Jarvis: How many?

Mr. Gray: —although the figures have indicated that in past years there has been some reduction in unemployment in that period. However, I would not want to estimate the figure at this time, because it depends a lot on how vigorously the industry responds to the opportunities we are providing through our \$250 million fund for modernization, in becoming more competitive. A lot will depend on the vigour of that response, as I have said. Spokesmen for the industry have already indicated that they want to respond in a very active way by putting in new investment in the billions of dollars, far in excess of what we will be making available for modernization. I think that is a very healthy indication of what could be happening in future years.