

Oral Questions

difficulties but perhaps it might be discussed by the uniformity commissioners.

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AGRICULTURE**FERTILIZER—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF ADEQUATE SUPPLIES AND INFORMATION ON PRICE**

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent-Essex): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture on a matter of serious concern to the farmers of this nation. In view of the official estimate in the United States of over a one million ton shortfall in nitrogen fertilizer and a 700,000 ton shortfall in phosphorus, both of which are necessary elements in most fertilizers, can the minister indicate whether the government is still confident of adequate supplies in Canada, and what effect this shortfall in the United States will have in forcing prices upwards in Canada?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am still confident and optimistic that we are going to meet the demand for fertilizer for Canadian farmers. We are meeting the manufacturers again shortly and we have been in constant contact with them. I have just received a telegram from one of the largest manufacturers of fertilizer in western Canada pointing out that transportation is one of the big problems in getting supplies, the availability of cars, because there has never been such a demand for railway cars for all commodities as at the present time in Canada.

Mr. Danforth: In view of the fact the statement the minister filed on fertilizer in the House dealing with the price of fertilizer to Canadian farmers said that prices would not be as high as in the United States but would be higher in Canada this year, can the minister give the House an undertaking that after his meeting he will make a statement in the House dealing specifically with the price of fertilizer so that farmers will know what they have to be concerned about?

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, whether the House is in session or not it is our intention, after we have our meeting with the fertilizer firms, to make a statement so that the public can know what we feel the position on fertilizers is so far as supply and price are concerned.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I see some 30 members on my left rising at the same time and there are only three or four minutes left before the end of the question period. I appeal to hon. members. Obviously, many will have to be disappointed because there is no time for more than three or four more questions. The hon. member for Malpeque rises on a supplementary question.

● (1450)

Mr. Neale (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Yesterday I put two questions to the hon. member for St. Boniface, the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Transport. Toward the end of the question period the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River rose on a point of order to ask if my questions could be answered because the minister had then entered the

[Mr. Lang.]

House. Your Honour said that you would give priority to those two questions in today's question period.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I did not say whether I would give priority at the start or the end of the question period. The hon. member is still entitled to his priority. I have not forgotten the undertaking. For the moment the Chair recognizes the hon. member for Malpeque.

FERTILIZER—ASSURANCE OF ADEQUATE SUPPLY TO PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND FARMERS

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture. During his visit to Prince Edward Island a few days ago, which we welcomed, was he able to assure the provincial government and the agricultural associations he met that every action is being taken to assure a reasonable supply of fertilizer for the heavy users of fertilizer there at reasonable prices?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I think we all understand that input costs are now higher for fertilizer. If the hon. member means that these prices have to be taken into account with regard to the final cost of fertilizer, yes, that is what I said. I think he will also understand that one plant in Prince Edward Island is running at full blast at this time of the year, something it never did before, I understand. The other plants intend to start blending fertilizer and they will do everything they can to supply fertilizer. We will be taking this into further consideration when we meet.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Elgin.

REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN SUPPORT PRICES FOR BUTTER, SKIM MILK POWDER AND FARM-SEPARATED CREAM

Mr. John Wise (Elgin): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the recent requests and representations made to the Minister of Agriculture by the dairy farmers of Canada, supported by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, for an increase in support prices of two cents per pound on butter, six cents a pound on skim milk powder and 30 cents on farm-separated cream, would the minister indicate what immediate steps he is taking to fulfil these very necessary requests? Can the minister indicate whether or not he is presently discussing this situation with the Dairy Commission?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I met with the dairy farmers of Canada yesterday. I have also instructed the Canadian Dairy Commission to make a full report on dairy production input costs, etc., available by the end of January for the government.