

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, November 22, 1974

The House met at 11 a.m.

## MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**Mr. Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill S-17, an act to amend the Explosives Act, to which the concurrence of this House is desired.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B)

A message from His Excellency the Administrator of the Government of Canada transmitting Supplementary Estimates (B) with regard to sums required for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1975 and, pursuant to the provisions of the British North America Act, 1867, recommending those estimates to the House of Commons, was presented by Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board) and read by Mr. Speaker to the House.

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● (1110)

[English]

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

### WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE IN ROME—REPORT BY MINISTER

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to report on the World Food Conference which began slightly more than two weeks ago in Rome. Last Saturday the conference came to a close, and of the 123 countries represented and the more than 1,200 delegates attending, virtually none did not have impressed upon them the need for increased production by all farmers in the world. While many countries were called on to produce more food and help developing countries to do the same, Canada was among the few that had chosen to give a clear and significant mandate to their representatives at the conference.

Let me say a word about our representatives. Our delegation at Rome was well prepared and was one of the best there, if not the best. We had two federal cabinet ministers, a provincial cabinet minister, three parliamentary observers and representatives of the public service. They all took their responsibilities very seriously and worked hard to achieve positive results. Right here I would like to

set the record straight about one thing. Some people have alleged that our delegation was trying to filibuster in the committee dealing with trade. This is absolutely false. At no time did anyone on the Canadian delegation attempt any type of negative action at the conference. In point of fact, there were fairly extensive exchanges on the trade issue but these were between the delegates of the developing countries that held some very divergent views on the subject.

When my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen), made known our willingness to provide a more than proportionate share of the minimum world target for food aid and to more than double contributions to the world food program, there was a good deal of optimism that the turning point of the conference had been reached. The feeling of optimism was increased when Australia made a corresponding offer in response to the example set by Canada. If other countries had done the same, the World Food Conference would have been a greater success.

Everyone with a real interest in farmers and agriculture ought to have the chance to go to a meeting like the World Food Conference. It brings home just how important good farmers and productive, efficient agriculture really are. When I sat in on some of those meetings held in a big building that Mussolini had put up for the 1942 Olympic Games and waited for the translators to catch up to the speaker, or maybe listened to delegates from various countries arguing for 20 minutes whether the right word to use in a sentence was "scarce" or "limited", I had a chance to think about some of the countries that were represented there.

What really struck me was that there were no developed countries that did not have well developed agriculture as the strong foundation for the rest of their economy. If a country's agriculture was not healthy, you could be pretty sure that they were having other problems as well. You could see the same sort of thing with respect to the developing countries. You cannot just lump them all together under that name. Some of them who had not paid enough attention to their farmers and their needs were wishing they had. But you could tell that the countries that were really looking after their agriculture were also going to take off pretty quickly in the rest of their development.

To try to get anything done in those committees was something else again. They would start off with a pretty reasonable draft of a resolution and go at it until it looked like the turkey two days after Thanksgiving dinner. Sometimes I wondered if they would ever get any meat back on the bones. In spite of the difficulties, we did make progress. Our delegation met several times a day to discuss progress and problems in the committees. In this work we