

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Agriculture.

Considering that this morning we heard from very reliable sources that producers are already shipping their animals for slaughter, considering the lack of grain and the fact that producers anxious to get grains cannot obtain them because of protests that are now paralyzing the system, can the minister assure the House that he will check this information or at least make a statement and, finally, whether he will find solutions to answer the claims of producers?

[English]

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, making statements will not help in finding solutions to the situation. We had a meeting earlier in the day just before coming into the House concerning this particular problem. We are aware of the conditions that exist, but we have no control over those people who want to ship their livestock. As far as I know there has been no evidence presented as yet that anyone is actually without feed.

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FINANCE

RELATIONSHIP OF CANADIAN AND UNITED STATES DOLLAR—
DATE OF PUBLICATION OF ECONOMIC REVIEW

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that Canada's current deficit on the international account is running at the rate of \$4 billion to \$5 billion a year, and the Canadian dollar seems to be maintaining relative parity with United States and other currencies, will the Minister of Finance advise the House on the extent to which the Bank of Canada has entered the international market in order to maintain that relative parity, and what has caused the government to abandon what the minister euphemistically called a relatively clean float? Will the minister also give us those reasons, and indicate when the economic review of his department, the publication of which is overdue now, will be brought down?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I can reassure the hon. gentleman that the float remains clean and free, as evidenced by the fact that the reserves in the exchange account have varied very little over the past two or three months. As to the value of the dollar throughout the year, of course this will depend on the effect of two conflicting forces; first, the factor the hon. member has mentioned, the large current account deficit we anticipate for the year, and secondly, the attractiveness of the Canadian economy to investment from abroad. As to the economic review, I apologize to the House that it is not quite ready. I went over it finally this weekend and we expect to have it published and tabled very shortly.

[Mr. Whelan.]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION

SUGGESTED USE OF DREE PROGRAMS TO COUNTERACT
UNEMPLOYMENT IN ATLANTIC CANADA

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, in view of the serious unemployment problems continuing to plague Atlantic Canada, is the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion taking advantage of the presence of the premiers in Ottawa this week to discuss new initiative and thrust for DREE in addition to the selective aid for the Halifax-Dartmouth and Strait of Canso areas of Nova Scotia, which, while very welcome, is obviously inadequate to help the general economic picture in eastern Canada at a time of very high unemployment?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, of course I will be talking to the premiers while they are here. As the hon. member knows, I was speaking with Premier Regan at length yesterday in Halifax, and also ministers of the government of Newfoundland. I think the fact that we signed this agreement yesterday is indicative of the fact that we are anxious to do whatever we can to alleviate unemployment in Nova Scotia and in other Atlantic provinces.

POSSIBILITY OF NEW DREE PROGRAMS TO COUNTERACT
UNEMPLOYMENT IN NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion is prompted by the very serious and alarming rate of unemployment in Newfoundland, which now stands at 18.8 per cent. What new federal initiatives does the minister intend to take in view of this alarming and frightening rate of unemployment in the province of Newfoundland?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Well, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I can give all the details in the time permitted in the question period. We have a number of supplementary agreements already in operation. I mentioned, in answer to the previous question, that there were consultations with the Government of Newfoundland yesterday which will lead to at least three others, one having to do with the fishing industry. There will also be considerable work undertaken in and around the city of St. John's, which I know will be of special interest to the hon. member. I might say that the figures for last month,—I have not had an opportunity to examine them in detail—while recognizing that they are annually high at this time of the year, probably were to some extent affected by the fisheries strike which now happily is over.

REASON FOR ALLOCATING FUNDS FOR THE FURTHER STUDY
OF CONTAINER FACILITIES AT HALIFAX

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, I have a related question. I wonder whether the minister could explain to the House the reasoning or the thought behind the inclusion of an item of \$1 million in the agreement entered into yesterday with the province of