

Oral Questions

SOCIAL SECURITY

SUGGESTED GRANTING OF OLD AGE PENSION AT AGE 55

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, my question is for my erudite and honourable friend the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In reference to his welcome adoption of my party's policy of extending pensions and allowances to spouses of OAS pensioners who themselves have not reached 65 years of age, would the minister now consider adopting the rest of our policy and having such eligibility begin at 55 rather than 60 years of age?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I am pleased to welcome the return of my honourable friend to the House and to advise him that his proposal will interest me on condition that he extend the coverage to citizens who are 45 years of age.

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[English]

AGRICULTURE

BEEF CATTLE—SUGGESTED MEASURES TO STABILIZE INDUSTRY—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. In light of recent statements by the four western premiers calling for help to stabilize the beef industry in western Canada and Canada as a whole, how is the minister responding to the suggestion that a 50 per cent sharing of aid may be implemented by the federal government in conjunction with the provincial governments or that a \$100 per head advance payment be made to farmers engaged in cow-calf operations?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost we feel that the beef industry is a national problem and will be dealt with on a national basis. We feel that the request has certain merits and consultations are taking place with provincial authorities of every province, I believe, at our headquarters at the Sir John Carling Building and it is hoped that a workable program will be found to salvage the beef industry.

BEEF CATTLE—PROPOSED IMPOSITION OF IMPORT QUOTA BY UNITED STATES—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. In view of the fact that Canada's calf crop will not find space in feed lots throughout the nation, and in light of the fact that the Americans have said they would impose an import tax on beef from Canada, how is the minister responding to that and what action does he propose in order to protect Canadian farmers?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I think the action we have taken to protect Canadian farmers is the reason the American authorities are suggesting that they will take the action reported in the press. We have heard nothing more officially from the

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

United States than you have seen in the press. We have been in contact with them as late as Friday and the United States government had made no decision at that time. I do not know if we have been in contact with them today.

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CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

RUSSIA-CANADA HOCKEY SERIES—CARRYING OF ALTERNATIVE TV PROGRAMS

Mr. Arnold Malone (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State. May I ask the rationale for the fact that in the remote areas of the north during the recent Russia-Canada hockey series, the games broadcast by CTV were also shown on CBC stations?

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I will have to look into that.

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GRAIN

REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN INITIAL PRICE AND ASSURANCE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH WHEAT BOARD SALES

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. Due to the fact that the initial price of grain sold to the Canadian Wheat Board is far below the price being quoted for domestic feed grains, when will the minister or the Canadian Wheat Board be making an announcement that the initial price of grain sold to the Wheat Board will be substantially increased?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, we are giving consideration to the question of revising the initial price, even though the normal policy would be to set prices for the whole year. I should like to say that I hope members will help in the cause by pointing out to farmers that it is the full value of the grain that counts and not the initial price. Even if we raise the initial price, that should not be the only relevant consideration in judging whether to sell to the Wheat Board or to the off-board grain market.

Mr. Towers: A supplementary question. Will the minister give his assurance that after Canada's domestic requirements are met, this government will not interfere with the Wheat Board sales policy in a manner similar to the action taken by the United States in its recent sales of grain to Russia?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I can assure hon. members that because of the operation of the Canadian Wheat Board in the export of wheat and barley there is never any danger in this country of sales being made which have to be cancelled.