

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)):** Mr. Speaker, what did happen yesterday as a result of the OECD meeting and the communique is that for the first time we have 24 of the OECD countries unanimously making a declaration on agriculture. I think that is very good news.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mayer:** I also think that the Prime Minister needs to be congratulated for the lead he has taken, as well as the two Ministers of this Government who attended that meeting.

## CAIRNS GROUP MEETING

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister points out that the Prime Minister should receive a bow, too. The Prime Minister noted that the Cairns group on grain is going to be meeting here next week. Since the two warring parties are the EEC and the United States, which is party to the agreement yesterday, is the Minister going to invite representatives from the EEC and the United States to be participants in the Cairns group meeting next week? Since they are the principal adversaries in this trade war, can there really be an effective or useful meeting without those two warring parties? Surely we cannot have a peace treaty without the two combatants in the war.

**Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member will know that the first meeting which was held in Cairns, Australia, last August—hence the name “the Cairns group”—is made up of 14 so-called fair trading agricultural nations. It involves more than just grain. Thailand, for instance, is very interested in rice, and many of the developing countries are also there as a result of sugar and sugar-beets.

At the Cairns meeting both the United States and European Community were there as observers, as was Japan. Those invitations have been extended so that those countries and the European Community can be there and make their presentations as a result of being observers at the meeting. So they are certainly included. However, the prime focus of the Cairns group is to get 14 of the trading countries which believe we trade fairly in agriculture together so that collectively we can take that message to some of the other countries we think are causing the problems, namely, the European Community, the United States, and Japan.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR FARMERS

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board with respect to the OECD Accord and grain wars in the world and the fact there is no timetable as of yet and no penalties if anyone breaks this Accord. Those are to be worked out during the Uruguay round of GATT negotiations.

I want to ask the Minister the specific question which some farm organizations asked me this morning. They are concerned

to know whether or not we have some guarantees that the European Common Market and the United States, which are the main culprits in the trade war, will be the ones which begin to roll back farm support massively before countries like Canada are expected to cut back on support to farmers. Can we have the guarantee from the Minister that we will not be cutting back on farm support to farmers until there is at least a level playing field around the world, if even at that time?

**Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)):** Mr. Speaker, that has been our position as a Government and that is the position of the farm community. We see the support we are providing for our farmers as being in reaction and in order to keep our farmers in business, as a result of the silliness which is going on between the Europeans and the Americans.

I will even go one step further and say that Canada in the past, in the early 1970s, participated by itself in reducing its over-all production. We have no intention of getting into anything like that either unless we have complete agreement and assurance from the other grain exporting countries that they are prepared to do the same.

• (1500)

## GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO FARMERS

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his answer. Another concern voiced to me this morning by some farmers and farm organizations was with respect to the fact that we know the Government, at least publicly, has not made a commitment yet to a deficiency payment next fall. We know at least that that is the public position.

Can the Minister assure the House that in no way will the agreement reached in Paris yesterday jeopardize, influence or have any impact on the Government's thinking as to whether or not there will be a deficiency payment next fall? Can the Minister assure us that what happened in Paris yesterday will not influence the Government with respect to whether or not there will be a deficiency payment next year that might guarantee farmers a final price that is no lower than they received for last year's crop?

**Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)):** Mr. Speaker, surely the Hon. Member should have prefaced his question by saying that what happened yesterday in Paris at the OECD meeting is a step in the right direction and that it is some good news.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mayer:** With regard to the support the Government has shown for agriculture, it is substantial. It has increased dramatically. It is up 350 per cent.

The Minister of Finance said yesterday: “Just because we have called for a truce that doesn't mean that the support programs are going to disappear because you cannot leave the