

Oral Questions

directed to me in the House over the past three weeks on this subject. The facts are exactly as I indicated.

* * *

[English]

GRAIN

WHEAT—REQUEST PRODUCERS BE COMPENSATED FOR LOSSES RESULTING FROM STRIKES AND ASSURANCE THAT SITUATION WILL NOT OCCUR AGAIN

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Justice in his capacity as minister in charge of the Wheat Board. Given the fact that Canada's wheat producers have suffered the loss of \$261 million during the current crop year according to the calculations of the Palliser Wheat Growers' Association, can the hon. gentleman tell the House what the federal government is prepared to do to compensate producers for such losses since, in present circumstances, the producers are powerless to act? Can he give an assurance we shall not see a repetition of this sort of thing in the next crop year?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Of course, everyone regrets losses caused to anyone as a result of a strike, and our objective is to lessen that kind of harm to everyone. However, the calculation the hon. member makes can hardly be accepted; I presume it is based on a change in price between the time at which grain might have been sold and the time at which it was subsequently sold. If the hon. member is using that logic I would have to remind him that a year and a half earlier a strike delayed sales and that wheat which might have been sold at a lower price was subsequently sold at a higher price.

Mr. Mazankowski: The minister is well aware of the existence of the Palliser Wheat Growers Association and I believe he is familiar with its membership. So I would take their figures as being valid. It seems to me the minister is expecting the wheat farmer to bear the brunt of the loss and after the setback in Saskatchewan I expected the hon. gentleman might have taken a different approach. May I ask him when he will begin looking after the interests of the farmers instead of the big unions, big business and Liberal governments?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lang: The Palliser Wheat Growers Association is, indeed, one of the more reasonable organizations and I would therefore expect them to accept the logic of my previous answer. I would also expect they would recognize, if one put the question to them, that this minister has done a great deal for the grain farmer.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Mr. Lalonde.]

INDIAN AFFAIRS**SUGGESTED WITHDRAWAL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES**

Mr. Wally Firth (Northwest Territories): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Following his meeting yesterday with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and bearing in mind the widespread objection to his department's policy guidelines I should like to ask the minister whether he would be willing to withdraw those guidelines. I should like a yes or no answer to that one.

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): The answer is no, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**DATE OF CLOSURE OF UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BASE OF GOOSE BAY—COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION TO GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND**

Mr. Walter C. Carter (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Can the minister tell the House whether he received any information from his counterpart in the United States with respect to the pending closure of the U.S. Air Force Base at Goose Bay? If so, can he tell us when this information was received, and whether it has been communicated to the government of Newfoundland?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker, it has been known for some time that this base would be closed next year. Pursuant to that decision of the United States government a committee was established, including representatives of the Government of Canada, the government of Newfoundland and, I understand, the Municipality of Happy Valley, to lay out plans to minimize any dislocation which might occur as a result of this projected closure.

Mr. Carter: This closure might have been on the cards for some time. Would the minister tell the House if and when he has been informed by the United States government as to the exact date of closing, whether the date has been communicated to the province of Newfoundland and, if so, when?

● (1440)

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I presume that the government of Newfoundland was advised by the officials and the ministerial assistants whom, I understand, have been working with our officials on this matter for some time. As to the precise date when the information was conveyed by the United States to Canada, I would have to check into that but it has been known for some considerable time. The information that was made public was certainly known to officials of both governments and to the officials of the municipality.

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the implications of the closure of the Goose Bay