

occur in Manitoba? I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask the Minister, is he willing to say here and now that he will not have anything to do with that agreement that stipulates a paltry sum of \$204,000 for any and all damages for a dam that is supposed to last for 100 years, and a 50-year permit that he signed?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member refers to the unbinding—is that the word he used?

Some Hon. Members: Non-binding.

Mr. McMillan: Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, the licence with the 13 conditions states that the licensee shall not divert water from outside the Souris River drainage basin if such diverted waters would increase the annual flow of the Souris River at the international boundary above that which would have occurred in a state of nature.

That is one of the 13 very stringent conditions attached to the permit. The Minister of the Environment, under the International River Improvements Act, has the full authority to revoke the permit if any one of those conditions is not met, and to bring the project itself to a sudden end in that eventuality.

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[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

ALLEGED CLOSING OF POST OFFICES IN LÉVIS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): My question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation. For a few days now some people in my riding have been claiming that Canada Post officials have decided to close certain post offices, including one on Commerciale Street in Lévis and one on Bélair Street. I want to know if Canada Post did decide to close post offices in my riding.

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Hon. Member that no change nor any closing is planned which would lead to reduced services or fewer post offices in his community.

Oral Questions

• (1500)

[English]

AGRICULTURE

ONTARIO FARMERS AFFECTED BY DROUGHT—GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. In early July, after a meeting of the federal-provincial Agriculture Ministers, the Minister of Agriculture promised that he would be providing assistance to Ontario agriculture producers who suffered from the drought in the early spring months and during the summer, on an equitable and fair basis similar to what had been provided in western Canada, which amounted to some \$150 million from the two levels of government.

Can the Minister say when that promise will be kept? The Ontario producers estimate their losses at over \$750 million. When will that promise to give immediate and urgent aid to those producers be kept?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Hon. Member that, as we said this summer, we are following the situation very closely, not only in the West but in Ontario and in Québec. We will not know the result of the situation until after the harvest but we are following it very closely. My colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, and I will be able to announce our position in a few weeks.

CROP INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the Minister that those producers have bank commitments to meet. In some cases their crops are 60 per cent lost. I think it is urgent that the Minister act.

Two weeks ago representatives of 12 farm organizations, representing 60,000 producers, called on the Minister to bring in amendments to the Crop Insurance Program so that when disasters such as this occur in the future there will be adequate coverage from the Crop Insurance Program.

Can the Minister advise when those changes and amendments will be made to the Crop Insurance Program in order that there can be adequate coverage in the future?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows that we have been working on the crop insurance situation for a while. We are negotiating with all the provinces, and that is very important. We do not always receive collaboration from all our counterparts at the provincial level.

I wish to assure the Hon. Member that we are taking the situation under consideration. For those farmers, particularly in Ontario, who have some problems with their crops this year, we will follow what we said at the end of July. We will stand