

Oral Questions

We think this is an excellent initiative. It is good for the environment, for the economy, for western Canada, good for Ontario, and good for Canada.

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AGRICULTURE

HIGH QUALITY WHEAT—REQUEST FOR FINAL PAYMENT TO PRODUCERS

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. He knows that Canadian wheat producers are facing the lowest prices since the 1930s. Is the Deputy Prime Minister prepared to make a commitment today to take the necessary steps to ensure that producers of No. 1 and No. 2 Red Spring wheat will receive the full final payment to which they are entitled for the 1985-86 crop year, as has been recommended to the Government by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association, and other responsible farm groups in western Canada?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Government acknowledges the fact that grain producers are going through a difficult period, that their income is down, and is taking concrete steps to redress this situation. The fact is that while prices are down, support from the federal Government has increased by some 62 per cent over the last two years of the Liberal administration. I think that is a very good record.

As the Prime Minister has indicated, the details of the billion dollar farm aid package to the grain and oil seeds producers of Canada will be announced later on this week. The Minister of Agriculture and the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board are currently meeting with representatives of the total agricultural industry. I can assure the Hon. Member that this Government will not leave the farmers in a difficult situation without our full support. In fact, I think the record will clearly show that no Government in the history of Canada has given more support to agriculture and the grain and oil seeds producers than this Government.

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL COMMITMENT

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, we are still facing the lowest grain prices since the Bennett Government of the 1930s. The Deputy Prime Minister knows that not making that full final payment on No. 1 and No. 2 Red Spring wheat will cost the western wheat growers some \$200 million. In 1970 there was a special payment made for Durum. Why is

the Minister reluctant to give a full commitment to make that final payment to western grain producers for the past crop year?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in addition to the \$1 billion package, the details of which will be announced later on this week, I think I can also indicate to the Hon. Member that there will be a deficit within the Canadian Wheat Pool account which will have to be met by the federal Treasury. That is an additional amount of money which will go directly to support the farmers.

Let me say that we are not only supporting the farmers in terms of improving their income, we are out selling and marketing. That is quite different from the Hon. Member's Leader who said to the farmers: "Go and sell your own wheat".

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FISHERIES

BLUEFIN TUNA—LICENSING OF JAPANESE VESSELS

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. In response to Premier Buchanan and some prominent Nova Scotia Tories, the Minister issued a licence which would grant two Japanese fishing vessels the right to catch 401 bluefin tuna off the coast of Nova Scotia, in return for which the Japanese would pay to Bayshore Tuna Limited, a company run by prominent Nova Scotia Tories, the sum of over \$400,000. Can the Minister explain why he ignored the advice of his own Department, his own Atlantic regional council, and his own tuna advisory committee in authorizing this blatant giveaway?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): In fact, Mr. Speaker, the answer is quite simple.

Some Hon. Members: They are Tories.

Mr. Siddon: These tuna are international in nature.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Siddon: The Canadian share of these tuna has only been fished to the extent of 10 per cent of the quota. A group of fishermen and a company were near bankruptcy because the tuna did not come inshore so that company is being allowed to fish those tuna and to learn how the Japanese catch tuna on the high seas—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!