

[English]

AGRICULTURE

LONG-TERM PROGRAMS TO HELP FARMERS

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. He knows that under the U.S. Farm Bill U.S. farmers will get even more subsidies next crop year while the Europeans show no sign of backing off in their subsidies. Given the likelihood of the international grain subsidy wars continuing, what long-term programs is the Government contemplating to get grain producers in Canada through the next three to five years?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I answered part of that question a few moments ago. We will continue doing exactly what we have been doing in the last six or eight months. We will be convening meetings in February, in co-operation with farmers, to chart a course that will get us through these very difficult times.

SPECIAL CANADIAN GRAINS PROGRAM

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, in light of the pay-out yesterday would the Minister assure the House that it continues to be government policy to view this \$1 billion pay-out as new money separate from any future grain income so it will not reduce pay-outs under the stabilization programs now in effect?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, when the program was announced we said it would be \$1 billion of new money in the pockets of Canadian farmers, and that no existing funding of any agricultural program would be reduced. The announcement was, as usual, consistent with the policy enunciated by this Government.

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TARIFFS

CRITICISMS MADE BY BOOKSELLERS AND PUBLISHERS

Hon. John W. Bosley (Don Valley West): Mr. Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bosley: Mr. Speaker, there are in this House a number of present and future authors who will always be concerned about publishers' questions. My question is directed to the Minister of Communications. I would like to know whether she accepts as legitimate the deeply serious and deeply concerned criticisms which have been made of federal policy by Canada's booksellers and publishers and, if she does, what is she going to do about them?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, may I thank the Hon. Member for Don Valley West for the very succinct and proper way in which he presents his question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some Hon. Members: Answer it!

Miss MacDonald: Obviously he had a certain length of time to learn how to present questions and he has learned well. May I say to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question was succinct and I would ask the Hon. Minister to be equally succinct.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, we all learn in this place. May I say to him that I had the opportunity to meet yesterday with representatives of the industry and listened to their concerns. Some of them were legitimate and some were unfounded. I think I had the opportunity to allay some of the fears and point out that we had already taken steps to show our good faith and interest in the book publishing industry by adding substantially to the funding of the book publishing development fund and setting up of a fund for the public use of literary works.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Mount Royal.

MINISTER'S STATEMENT—UNITED STATES DUTY ON CANADIAN SHAKES AND SHINGLES

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the short-sighted initiative taken by the Minister who just spoke is going to have terrible repercussions on this House. The entire book industry in Canada is appealing to the Government to remove the tariff on imported books. The Minister of Finance stubbornly clings to the absurd notion that we are retaliating against the American shakes and shingles—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Will the Hon. Member put her question?

Mrs. Finestone: My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. How can he explain the contradictions in the statement made yesterday to the Coalition of Canadian Book Publishers that the book tariff would be removed in exchange for concessions on the shakes and shingles duty with his Government's previous statement that cultural industries would be not a bargaining chip on the free trade table?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not know that there is anything inconsistent in those two statements. The question of shakes and shingles arose last May. The response this Government made to that action had nothing at all to do with free trade talks. We said it was in the national interest for the Government to respond, and respond firmly, to the action taken by the U.S. Government. We did that. As I said at that time, we were not happy with the action