

*Oral Questions***REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT****WORKERS' CO-OPERATIVES—REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT SUPPORT**

**Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Economic Development. The task force report on co-operative development strategy for Canada was received today. In the last number of years the Government has poured a lot of money into industrial development in many areas and then turned the industries over to the private sector. A few years later, after skimming off the cream, those industries often closed down their operations. This leaves the workers unemployed again.

The Government has indicated some tentative support for workers' co-ops which give the employees a vested interest in keeping such plants in operation. Will the Minister address the model of workers' co-ops in industrial development and job creation and give the workers the support necessary, rather than passing that money on to the corporate sector?

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Minister of State for Economic and Regional Development and Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, I have always been a big supporter of the co-operative movement. I think it has many exciting dimensions and is one of the greatest forms of free enterprise. I am delighted to hear the NDP supporting it so vigorously. I intend to make some statements about the co-operative movement in the course of my campaign.

**HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES**

**Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, since we have that unequivocal support by the Minister, would he support the idea of establishing an infrastructure and support structure for workers' co-ops which would allow those co-ops to develop? That kind of structure was in place for co-op housing and has been undermined by the Government in the last few months. Would the Minister re-establish that kind of support for housing, and also establish support for other groups of co-op development, particularly for worker co-op development as recommended in the co-op task force report?

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Minister of State for Economic and Regional Development and Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, I have not had the opportunity of reading the co-op task force report. I certainly shall do so. I am told that the efforts of the federal Government in the housing sector have certainly not been reduced at all. It remains a priority. I have just discussed the matter with my colleague, and he would deny adamantly the suggestion that that is being done.

In terms of the co-operative movement *per se* I would be very interested in considering any structures which the Hon. Member may care to propose. Having wider ownership through the co-operative movement, or through shareholdings directly, and the kinds of incentives that were provided in the last Budget of the Minister of Finance, are all excellent. I

would like to look at any proposals the Hon. Member would care to make to me.

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**RAILWAYS****ALFALFA PRODUCTS FREIGHT RATES**

**Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. It relates to another chapter in what I could call the alfalfa products freight rate issue in southern Alberta. I hope the Minister recalls my question of last January regarding this matter. At that time he responded very positively that alfalfa products were indeed entitled to the new freight rate schedule.

The Minister should now be aware that the railways, specially the CPR, are charging Tirol Dehydraters of Tilley, Alberta, an extra \$400 per container. They are attempting to make this surcharge retroactive to the first of the year. Would the Minister indicate how the railways can ignore the direct instructions which the Minister personally gave to the CTC western division and the railways on this alfalfa freight rate issue?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I have been looking into the second round of complaints which came forward on that particular issue. The railways are claiming that the containers are not railway property, but in fact belong to the marine company which has the actual outright ownership of the containers. They say that it therefore does not fall under the rules of the Western Grain Transportation Act, but rather under the Railway Act and they therefore do not have to apply for new tariffs. However, the Canadian Transport Commission does have the authority to rule that in fact the container tariff can be ruled on under the WGTA. The CTC has not yet ruled on that particular complaint. I expect that it should be able to do so. Therefore, it would have the discretion to determine to whom the containers belong. If it rules that the containers are an asset of the railways, it would come under the jurisdiction of the Western Grain Transportation Act. At this point in time that is up to the CTC to decide.

**REQUEST THAT MINISTER CONDUCT INVESTIGATION**

**Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same Minister. I would like to thank him for the substance of his comments. The Minister should be aware that during the adjournment debate on this matter last January 23, the Parliamentary Secretary on duty on that particular occasion speaking on behalf of the Government made this statement:

● (1450)

Alfalfa or any other eligible crop is entitled to move at the statutory rate, whether it moves in containers or by other more traditional means.