

Oral Questions

province of Prince Edward Island, there is a program relating to biomass and the commercialization which we have done.

Second, in Alberta, the MDIP program, \$28 million, for instance to convert to natural gas and motive fuels, or in British Columbia, for two-cycle engines for highway transport trucks or transit buses, which we are doing in Vancouver, or rapid fueling for example where we can now fuel a bus in four or five minutes. There is the home demonstration demonstration project where a person can—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: The minister has a lot of examples.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the acting Minister of Agriculture. Agriculture Canada predicts that farm income across the prairies will drop by some 63 per cent this year. At the same time it states that this government's support for agriculture will be cut by 57 per cent.

Given the fact that 25 per cent of farming families are in some stage of bankruptcy, that spring seeding is about to commence, and given the fact that the new federal agricultural program is nothing more than a carrot that is being dangled in front of farmers and provincial governments, will this government make a real commitment to agriculture this year, or is it simply admitting that farming families in rural communities have been cut off, written off and forgotten by this government?

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, there is no way we are writing off the farmers. I think that the farmers realize that we are there with them and will stand with them through the difficulties they have had.

As was mentioned in an earlier question about the \$21 billion that had been sent to farmers in the past few years, we are there again. We offered a package of \$500 million last week to be matched by the provinces. We will stand firm with that. I believe the farmers of this country will respond and do well this year.

I have to mention as well that last November or December, predictions were made about the farm income. Since that time new projections have increased farm income for 1990 by around \$200 million. The seed has not been taken out of the bins yet, is not in the ground, and there are all kinds of opportunities for those things to change before this year is out.

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TRANSPORTATION OF DANGEROUS GOODS

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of National Revenue. A U.S. barge company has announced plans to ship dangerous chemicals from Detroit to Windsor. Will the minister confirm that in fact his ministry is not prepared to make a decision to provide customs officers to this proposal and is he also prepared to make a commitment that no such decision will be taken until such time as the environmental concerns that have been raised by the city of Windsor are fully dealt with?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that there have been discussions with BTI Barge Operations in Windsor for the possibility of the transportation of goods between Detroit and Windsor. But I want to assure the hon. member and all members of this House of Commons that absolutely no approval will be even considered unless and until all approvals are accepted and run through health, safety and environmental concerns. In other words, every element of health, every element of safety, and every element of the environment must be satisfied even before consideration will be given to the issuance of a licence.

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[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. I would like to get back to the regulations of the Official Languages Act. Once the regulations are tabled, they will of course have to be considered by this House or by a committee of the House, before they are published in the Canada Gazette, a process that will probably take several months from the date of tabling. Since this government has abdicated its leadership and is aggravating the language crisis through its failure to act, I want to ask the Minister whether its