

Western Grain Stabilization Act. In a press conference last April 25 the Minister, and his cohort from the other place, indicated amendments in order to trigger a payment. Can the Minister tell us when we can expect the tabling in the House of a Bill to amend the Act? Will that Bill contain amendments that will trigger a payment to farmers this spring?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I understand the Bill will be tabled soon. The Member will have to wait to see what the Bill says.

TIMING OF INTRODUCTION

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, the Minister and Members on the Liberal side have been saying "soon" for months. What is "soon"?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Very soon.

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THE PRIME MINISTER

REQUEST THAT VISIT TO BRITISH COLUMBIA BE SCHEDULED

Mr. Chuck Cook (North Vancouver-Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. I want the Prime Minister to know that the people of British Columbia are simply pining away as he fades into the sunset slowly. I speak on behalf of British Columbia and ask the Prime Minister to please make at least one more visitation to the Province of British Columbia. We would appreciate another philosophical speech about those who live—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I question whether this is appropriate for Question Period. Order.

Mr. Cook: Will the Prime Minister come back once to British Columbia before he finally goes?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Hon. Member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta.

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EMPLOYMENT

BRITISH COLUMBIA STATISTICS

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Since he prefers to compare statistics from one year to the next rather than over a three-year span, I would like to point out to him that a year ago in British Columbia there were 1,196,000 people employed, and today there are 1,174,000 people employed. That is a drop of 22,000 in the workforce. How does the Minister explain that? What does he plan to do to increase employment in British Columbia, which is the hardest hit area as a result of the recession?

Oral Questions

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I accept on faith the Hon. Member's figures. He should be a tinge optimistic because there has been an increase in employment of 5,000 in the latest monthly figures. For a more accurate response to his question about the difficulties of employment in which British Columbia finds itself, he should refer to the policies of the provincial Government which are so close to the kind of policies which would be introduced by his Party if the Canadian people were ever unfortunate enough to have it as the governing Party.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: That is why you only have one delegate in B.C., John.

RAILWAY UPGRADING—BENEFITS FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Transport. The Government promised that as a result of the Crow legislation there would be thousands of jobs created across Canada and literally millions, if not billions, of dollars invested. Presumably those jobs would accrue to the areas which would be affected by the Crow legislation.

What has the Minister of Transport done to ensure that the industrial benefits which are supposed to affect British Columbia as a result of the Crow legislation will come to British Columbia for example, the construction of cement railway ties and all of the other components of the railway expansion which were supposed to result from the Crow legislation?

• (1200)

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, to begin, I think the Hon. Member should be aware that just this week the Canadian Pacific Railway announced a letting of a contract for what would be the largest single construction project in North America, beginning in British Columbia this spring, in regard to the cutting of a new tunnel through the Rogers Pass. That will provide a large number of jobs and a very major investment for a number of contracting firms in British Columbia itself. That is only one example of a wide number of contracts. I take into account the contract recently let by the CNR for new steel rails to Sysco in Sydney.

There is an entire series of industrial benefits flowing across the country at the present time. I believe that the estimate for purchases this year will be in the neighbourhood of \$1.1 billion.

In terms of ensuring that those contracts are given preference in the local areas where the work is being done, my colleague, the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, and I have worked with the railways to establish a number of seminars across the country between the railways and the local suppliers. Of course he also knows that the western industrial benefits package is now available and presently being used to help enable western suppliers and manufacturers to bid on those contracts.