

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FLOW-THROUGH SHARES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, the finance committee report does not radically change the White Paper proposition. Since I cannot get a response from the Deputy Prime Minister, I will direct my question to the Minister of State (Forestry and Mines). What does he intend to do to convince his colleague the Minister of Finance to maintain the earned depletion allowance on flow-through shares so that such regions as Abitibi—Témiscamingue, northern Ontario, northern Manitoba, in fact a major part of western Canada, and even the Maritimes may continue to benefit from this tax incentive which creates many jobs and promotes regional development throughout the country?

[English]

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of State (Forestry and Mines): Mr. Speaker, we share the view that the flow-through share mechanism has been very useful. In fact there has been an increase of some 30-fold in mining exploration in terms of what has been spent. A great deal of that money has come through the flow-through share mechanism.

The Hon. Member knows full well that the tax reform program left the flow-through share mechanism in place. It is in place this year, and it will be in place next year and the years following.

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TRADE

UNITED STATES GRAIN EXPORTS—USE OF EXPORT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds. The discussions some weeks ago between the Secretary of State for External Affairs and Mr. Schultz do not appear to be inhibiting the U.S. from continuing its use of the Export Enhancement Program in Canada's traditional grain markets.

Since the United States is now offering to sell China one million tonnes of subsidized wheat and has added Bulgaria to its list, is the Government doing anything to convince the U.S. that it should switch tactics and attack the problem at its source, which is price? Has the Government asked the United States to raise its loan rate and to revert to its old policy since its new one has been so harmful to all world grain markets?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member will know that we regularly advise the Americans of our concern in this matter and let them know that we do not think it is helping at all as far as price is concerned. He will also know that our sales continue to increase, in spite of what the Americans are doing.

If the Hon. Member wanted to be fair about it, he would also do as the Government has been doing, which is to complain to the Europeans who are in many ways more guilty than the Americans in seeing the problems develop in the international grain markets.

The Hon. Member talks about Bulgaria. That is not a major market for Canada. While we do not like what the Americans are doing in Bulgaria, we have only sold wheat to Bulgaria two out of the last nine years. We do not feel it is a major market for Canadian grain.

REQUEST FOR PROGRAM TO INCREASE GRAIN INCOMES

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, since it appears that all the Government's initiatives thus far have not corrected the grain pricing problem, and there is a great shortfall since the implementation of the U.S. Farm Bill, will the Government announce now that it will put into place a \$2.6 billion program to bring grain incomes close to what they were before the implementation of the U.S. Farm Bill?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds): Mr. Speaker, I have three comments in response to the Hon. Member. First, we are preparing to announce shortly a record amount of money available to western farmers under the Western Grain Stabilization Act. We have been holding discussions with the Minister of Agriculture and the farm leaders about the possibility of having another direct financial assistance package available for all Canadian farmers this fall.

Third, if the Hon. Member wants to do something, he should deal with his cohorts in Manitoba. Agriculture is a joint responsibility. The Province of Manitoba is doing virtually nothing on behalf of farmers. This year the federal Government will spend \$600 million in the Province of Manitoba while the province itself will probably spend about one-tenth of that. There is a great responsibility on behalf of the province, and his NDP friends in Manitoba are letting the Manitoba farmers down.

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SENIOR CITIZENS

PROGRAM TO MEET NEEDS OF SENIORS

Mr. Bill Attewell (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Senior Citizens. May I say in passing that it is my experience from travelling with the Human Rights Committee that the seniors of this country are very confident that the Minister will apply the same dedication and sensitivity to them as he has given to veterans.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!