

Oral Questions

quite wrong. For rather obvious reasons, I do not want to get into the business of commenting on the day-to-day operations of the Canadian Wheat Board in connection with its currency holdings, but I can assure hon. members that the Canadian Wheat Board uses extremely good advice, does use hedging operations, and in fact came out very well indeed in the case of these particular currency holdings.

PROSECUTIONS UNDER WHEAT BOARD ACT—REQUEST
FOR REVIEW OF LEGISLATION

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. Due to the fact that a number of farmers in central Alberta are being charged in court under the Canadian Wheat Board Act, can the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, who is also the minister in charge of justice, assure this House that he will undertake a review of the act to ensure that it is formulated in such a manner as to be in the best interests of the grain producers?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated previously in the House, I have had discussions with the Canadian Wheat Board about the problem of charges in certain cases such as the ones to which the hon. member refers, and about the Wheat Board's requirement to take action in certain circumstances to protect its position. I will, therefore, take very seriously the hon. member's suggestion that we consider, at an early opportunity, whether additional provisions should be put into the Wheat Board Act to deal with special positions like that.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Nickel Belt for a question, and then perhaps we might have two or three supplementaries on the question which was of interest to the hon. member for Oxford.

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HOUSING

ALLEGED SHORTAGE OF SKILLED WORKERS—
POSSIBILITY OF IMMIGRANTS FILLING GAP

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Keeping in mind last year's 250,000 housing starts and the prediction by CMHC that there will be several thousand more housing starts across Canada this year than last year, and also considering the imminently grave shortage of 10,000 to 25,000 skilled workers in the housing and building trades next summer, what steps is the minister taking to avoid such a shortage?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will allow the minister to reply briefly, but normally this information should be given by way of a statement on motions.

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, officials of my department and I have met with the executive members of the Hous-

[Mr. Lang.]

ing and Urban Development Association of Canada for the purpose of devising measures to combat this situation, although there is at present quite a discrepancy between the estimated shortage of skilled workers reported by the hon. member and, as a matter of fact, reported by the Housing and Urban Development Association of Canada, and our own records. We are attempting to reconcile this now and are developing programs to alleviate the situation.

Mr. Rodriguez: Can the minister tell the House whether there were any discussions in terms of opening immigration avenues to solve this problem?

Mr. Andras: There has been an allusion to the question of immigration. I am not sure that is a bad solution, but we certainly have to examine the situation a great deal more deeply before I give a positive response in terms of opening up immigration for that purpose.

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FLOODS

REQUEST FOR ACTION TO PREVENT FURTHER DAMAGE
BY HIGH LEVELS OF GREAT LAKES

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Prime Minister. It relates to the question posed earlier by the hon. member for Norfolk-Haldimand. While all of us appreciate that the government is giving consideration to compensation and other matters because of the very high lake levels in southern Ontario, can the Prime Minister tell us what he plans to do in collaboration with several of his ministers, the Minister of Public Works, the Minister of the Environment, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and others, to prevent further damage, which will most certainly take place in the immediate future if something is not done? I draw your Honour's attention to the imminent spring breakup which when it takes place in Lake Erie, will cause damage of enormous proportions to houses and other property.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think my previous answer indicated that we do realize it is a serious problem, and that is why the government has set up this group under the Minister of the Environment to bring attention to it. Of course, meanwhile if the hon. member has specific suggestions to bring forth I am sure the minister would be pleased to hear them.

POSSIBLE ACTION BY INTERNATIONAL JOINT
COMMISSION TO LOWER LEVELS OF GREAT LAKES

Mr. Ron Atkey (St. Paul's): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of the Environment. In view of the fact that the city of Toronto executive committee yesterday requested the federal government to make immediate and urgent representations to the International Joint Commission with a view to lowering the dangerous high water levels of Lake Ontario and of the other Great Lakes, what steps has the government taken, and has the IJC been contacted?