

Oral Questions

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): The hon. member should be told the amount of quota the United States is increasing would mean we would have about 11 million more pounds which would go to the United States, but at this time this year we have shipped only 32.9 million pounds to the United States and last year we shipped 44.8 million pounds, so I do not think the change will affect us much.

Regarding any decision the government makes concerning the quota restrictions we have just put into effect, what we would do was clearly outlined in the news release at that time and I do not think we have any intention to change that, but to say there is no discussion about what the United States is doing, or on the whole beef situation in the world, would be wrong because there is discussion.

Mr. Hargrave: I would remind the minister that he made a very firm commitment to stick by this quota for 1978. However, in view of the statement made yesterday by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs that there is a shortage of beef, which is certainly not true, and that he will be discussing some initiatives with his colleagues, I ask the minister if he will explain some of the facts of life about beef production in Canada to his colleague, the Minister of Consumer Affairs, and what it means to survive in an industry which has not had a price increase in four years and which has been operating at less than the cost of production.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member is now making a representation.

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AIRPORTS

SAFETY FACILITIES AT CRANBROOK, B.C.

Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, on May 15 I directed a question to the Minister of Transport asking whether he could provide any positive evidence which would prove or demonstrate that there have been four violations involving vehicles on airport runways since the incident at Cranbrook on February 11. Does the minister have that information available?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I do not have that report at this point.

Mr. Brisco: In light of the fact that on April 20 a Pacific World Airlines aircraft was forced to go round again on a final approach because of a vehicle on the runway at Cranbrook airport, two months after the accident which brought about the fatal crash, is the minister now prepared—in light of this evidence passed to me by PWA—to order an immediate inquiry into the effectiveness of the ground-to-ground and ground-to-air facilities at this airport; or does he intend to wait until there is another accident?

Mr. Lang: The hon. member is being unfair. He knows full well that the whole question of these communications is pres-

[Mr. Hargrave.]

ently under investigation both as to the specific incident which occurred and at airports around the country. The inquiry is not related to one airport.

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CANADIAN CULTURE

COST OF DISCOVERY TRAIN PROGRAM

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State. Is the minister aware of the confusion and almost complete lack of accountability demonstrated by his officials at the standing committee yesterday, who want to increase the cost of the Discovery Train from \$750,000 to \$2,250,000 a year?

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): I would certainly not accept the hypothesis assumed by the hon. member at the beginning of his question as to confusion among my officials in their presentation yesterday. It is true the original estimates of the cost of the Discovery Train are below the cost we expect to be incurred. We are looking at various ways of making up the shortage.

Mr. Friesen: If the Secretary of State had been in the committee yesterday, he would have seen that confusion. Since Treasury Board has approved only \$750,000 per year for operating costs, I should like to ask him whether, in light of the government's so-called austerity program, he feels there is justification for tripling the cost of this operation.

Mr. Roberts: The hon. member knows it is not the custom of the Secretary of State to attend committee meetings when officials of the agencies are appearing, unless there is some special request for him to do so. He also knows I shall be meeting with the committee in 30 minutes. If he is asking me whether I know of the financial implications of this project, the answer is yes. If he is asking me whether I am considering ways of dealing with the problem, the answer is also yes.

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● (1502)

Mr. Speaker: I have notices from two hon. members regarding questions of privilege relating to documents tabled last evening, and I intend to rule on the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin). However, it being Thursday, there is the usual question about the business of the House, and I wonder if hon. members might agree that we take that now and then proceed to these questions of privilege. If so, I will recognize the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker) on a point of order.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.