

there will be little or no final payment for this year, as the minister himself has said?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity to join with the hon. member in being pleased about the completion of another contract with China in our long-standing relationship of being prime suppliers to them. This three million tons is a very notable sale. I do not think I would want to even begin speculating about price. The hon. member knows that current card prices are well over the initial price paid to the producer and that, obviously, has a very positive impact upon income.

Mr. Ritchie: Mr. Speaker, as the Wheat Board has announced the loss of \$81.5 million, sterling, in the years 1961 to 1976 in dealing with China—many producers feel it is even greater—can the minister tell the House why this was announced through the board's publication, "Grain Matters," rather than through the annual report of the Canadian Wheat Board?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Wheat Board, having put some information into the annual report, felt that farmers wanted a further explanation. Therefore, they published it in "Grain Matters." I would also inform the hon. member that the current contract with the Chinese is in Canadian dollars.

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● (1442)

COMMUNICATIONS

ALLEGED POLITICALLY-ORIENTED MEDIA SUMMARY SERVICE FOR PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, may I ask the Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council a question? In view of the publication of the Prime Minister's press office media summary and the official line of the press office, I ask if that document is just a time saver and is not the sinister tool for media manipulation that it might appear to be.

I ask the Deputy Prime Minister if the government will provide this media summary each morning to at least the leaders of the other parties, to the House leaders or, for that matter, to all members of parliament if there is no desire to manipulate the press.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of providing the media summary is to monitor both the electronic and print media with a view to saving time. I have been receiving the summary for some time and find it very useful. I gather that the leaders of the other parties have staff at their disposal who undoubtedly are providing them with a relevant update of current events in one form or another as they are reported in the media. I would see no reason to duplicate that service by providing a service from the PMO.

Oral Questions

Mr. Benjamin: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the media summary is not only a summary of news but reports the names of reporters and various members of the media and quotes people such as Hargreaves for being dry, Henderson for being more enthusiastic, and Michel Guenard for being straightforward and rather enthusiastic—this sort of assessment—could the Deputy Prime Minister tell the House if the summaries are being computerized? Is this an effort to separate the good guys from the bad guys in the press gallery? Can he tell the House the justification for this expenditure in addition to the PMO press office? Is this work being contracted out, or is it being done in the Prime Minister's office?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, it would be foolish of the hon. member to try to convince me that this practice is not followed in the office of the leader of every responsible party. There is a system by which news items are brought to the attention of the leader of the party. Many years ago, when I worked for a leader of the opposition, it was quite common to prepare a daily print summary. This is merely an update of a practice that has prevailed for a long time. The hon. member might be able to sell to someone else the idea that this is a new concept, but he should not try to sell it to me.

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TRADE

REPORT ON GATT NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to that consummate actor, the Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council who is in charge of the GATT negotiations. Would he bring us up to date? There is a western economic summit beginning on July 16. Mr. Jake Warren is now in Washington, meeting with Mr. Strauss and representatives of the EEC and Japan. We understand that U.S. officials have said they are beginning to see a pattern of agreement emerge in the GATT negotiations.

In view of the importance of these negotiations to Canada, particularly to central Canada, could the minister tell us what pattern of agreement is starting to be seen? What is this pattern of agreement? Could he give the House some details? Would he even agree to speak on motions some time before the House adjourns on June 30 to bring us up to date on this most important matter?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, along with a number of my colleagues, I had a meeting with Mr. Warren prior to his departure for Washington to meet with the United States and the community in Japan on multilateral negotiations. Certain views were conveyed to our chief negotiator as to how he ought to respond to prospective developments at that meeting. It is not possible to say that a pattern of settlement had emerged by last Wednesday. It may well have emerged, or will emerge at the meeting in Washing-