

Oral Questions

and the Chinese have not yet purchased. We continually say to the Americans that we do not think their approach to markets will work and, better than sending them messages, we have been taking action.

Mr. Nystrom: It hasn't worked.

Mr. Mayer: In fact our percentage of world wheat markets actually went up last year—

Mr. Nystrom: The price went down.

Mr. Mayer:—and the prospects in the coming year are that we are going to increase our markets again. We are taking action, not just sending protests.

UNITED STATES' TRADE POLICIES

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has publicly supported and defended U.S. action in Algeria. Does the Minister not believe it is time he stopped defending the United States' unfair policies and started taking action on behalf of Canadian farmers instead?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should know that I have not been defending the American actions.

Mr. Benjamin: You sure did.

Mr. Mayer: We have been saying consistently, and loudly and clearly, that we do not—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: Spineless.

Mr. Mayer: We all know you can print anything in the press—

Mr. Riis: Blame the media.

Mr. Mayer:—so what the Hon. Member is holding up does not hold any weight as far as I am concerned. We have been publicly and consistently raising protests not only about what the Americans are doing but about what the Europeans are doing. We are not supporting the Americans, we are supporting our farmers, that is what we are doing.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

WEATHER CAPABILITY OF LOW LEVEL AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Last fall when I asked questions regarding the all-weather capability of the Low Level Air Defence system awarded to Oerlikon, the Associate Minister of National Defence stated: "All weather does not include blizzards, sleet,

hail, hurricanes and tornadoes". In answer to the same question the Low Level Air Defence Project Manager, Mr. Dave Hampson, stated recently: "This system will fight anywhere in any weather". How can the Minister expect the public to share his confidence in this system when the Associate Minister and the chief official involved cannot themselves agree on its capability?

• (1450)

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, first, let me sincerely say to the Hon. Member that I am pleased to see him back and pleased to see him in good health.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, as I understand what the Hon. Member is saying, my colleague, the Associate Minister of National Defence, said that the system could shoot down anything that could fly in any weather. The disagreement was with whether it might even be able to go beyond that. The critical question is: if something can fly and attack either our bases or our troops can it be shot down? The answer is yes.

ALLEGED CONFLICTING STATEMENTS

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, the former Associate Minister of National Defence announced that the Low Level Air Defence system will provide protection "under all weather conditions", which is contrary to what has been said, while the chief technical adviser of the Low Level Air Defence project office has stated the system "will be useless in foul weather". What does the Minister really expect the public to believe when Ministers disagree with each other, when officials disagree with each other, and when Ministers disagree with their own officials?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has received an offer of a full briefing with regard to our LLAD system. We will be offering the same thing to all members of the Defence Committee this Thursday.

I suppose the question the Hon. member would want answered is this: if it can fly, can it be shot down? The answer is yes. If it cannot fly, it cannot be shot down.

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[Translation]

FINANCE

ALLEGED USURIOUS INTEREST RATES CHARGED BY CREDIT CARD COMPANIES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Robert Toupin (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Finance.