

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: Systems expert analyst?

Mr. Lang: The right hon. member might like us to buy an additional "X" number of cars. In his day he never thought of hopper cars. We have hopper cars now. We have a system that can handle 800 million to 850 million bushels of grain. When we continue to thrust for a new record, of course we will find the system is being tested to its fullest extent. I predict, for his benefit, that in about four years' time we will be going after a record of one billion bushels of export. We may have had some difficulties, but we are accomplishing.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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LOTO CANADA

LEASING OF COMPUTER TERMINALS

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport who is also responsible for Loto Canada. Can the minister indicate why Loto Canada has awarded a substantial contract, amounting to approximately \$23 million, for lease of computer terminals, plus perhaps \$5 million a year for servicing and support? This contract was let without a tendering process of any sort, in the face of substantial evidence that at least two other Canadian companies could have filled this contract at a price substantially below the price Loto Canada has agreed to pay.

Hon. Iona Campagnolo (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, while it is true there are certain Canadian companies which could have fulfilled the computer functions required, our investigations showed that General Instrument company was the only one which could supply us with the retail machines we required for this particular type of game.

In this connection, I should like to urge, for the hon. member's attention, that in excess of 50 per cent of the components are Canadian-made. It is our intention, before four years are up, to have it as close as possible to 100 per cent Canadian content. In addition, we have had enlightening consultation with existing Canadian companies which could participate in this deal and could make full use of the R and D grants which the Minister of State for Science and Technology recently announced. I believe that through all these various means we will soon, within four years, have as close to 100 per cent Canadian content in these machines as possible.

Mr. Blackburn: Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the minister whether the rapidity with which this contract was let has any relationship to competing against provincial lotteries across the country. The two other computer companies which might have filled this contract have indicated that terminals supplied by

[Mr. Lang.]

them would have been between 50 per cent and 75 per cent Canadian content, thus producing Canadian jobs, whereas the terminals supplied by General Instrument of Canada will most likely be imported from the United States.

I ask the minister whether she will rescind the current contract which is squandering perhaps millions of dollars of public money and resulting in the loss of an undetermined number of potential jobs in Canada at a period of high unemployment. Also, can the minister relate—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Campagnolo: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the hon. member listened to my answer to his question. I said that at this time we have between 51 per cent and 53 per cent Canadian content. He also asked in his last question, which I did not answer, why we did not put this to tender. It is because it is a Crown corporation. I believe we should note that the current Loto Canada contract was negotiated under constraints of time and confidentiality. They chose the company that could best fulfil their needs. I am prepared to have the corporation go to full tender for the additional components that are required. We have at this time purchased 2,000 terminals. There will be approximately 4,000 in due course and all Canadian companies, of course, will be able to make available their changes in technology if they have any at that time.

POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF LOTTERY

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is also to the minister responsible for gambling.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jelinek: Yesterday, when questioned by my leader, the Prime Minister said:

—the undertaking was not to prolong the lotteries without coming before parliament, and we intend to discharge this commitment.

In her last answer, the minister stated her proposal is that it last for a four-year period. Will the minister tell the House how she can justify spending even one cent on the extension of a program that has not been approved by this House, let alone the provinces, nine of which have already rejected the program, as the minister knows?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Iona Campagnolo (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for fancy figures has given me an excellent opportunity to remove from the record of this House that which his leader put on yesterday. Contrary to the hon. member's assertion yesterday, Loto Canada is not planning to introduce a slot-machine operation. It is not an instant-win game. Rather, winners will be selected through a regular draw process, just as they are now through Loto Canada's established lottery.