

Oral Questions

absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration I want to reassure the Hon. Member that his question will be referred to the Minister for a reply.

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MUSEUMS AND ART GALLERIES**HALIFAX ART GALLERY PROJECT**

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, my question, which is directed to the Minister of Communications, is with regard to the Public Works project announced in Halifax, a matter which was raised earlier by the Hon. Member for Dartmouth. Could the Minister please tell the House, and those members of the arts community in Halifax who are terribly upset about the decision, why the long-standing commitment to an art gallery or an art complex in Halifax has been abandoned in favour of an office building?

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, there were a number of discussions initiated by my Department with the authorities in Halifax, particularly with the present Conservative Government in Halifax. There was no indication on their part of any interest in participating with us in trying to develop that land, those buildings, for those purposes. We had a general program, as the Hon. Member knows—

Mr. Forrestall: That's absolute nonsense.

Mr. Fox:—under the special program of cultural initiatives which made funds available for those purposes. Any overtures on our part were met with a decision on the part of the provincial authorities of the Province of Nova Scotia, which the Hon. Member does not like me to say, to the effect that they, for their own reasons, were not ready to give necessary, priority to that building and therefore were not ready to participate financially.

Mr. Forrestall: That's nonsense. You know it's nonsense.

Mr. Bosley: Madam Speaker, I think the Minister knows that that is not quite right.

GOVERNMENT PLANS

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, since the Minister has now abandoned his long-standing commitment to a gallery, what plans does he have to provide to the residents of Halifax and Nova Scotia, for the first time, a proper art gallery, with federal assistance? I ask this, particularly in view of the fact that part of the justification given for the announcement of the new National Gallery last year was that all the regional galleries, including Halifax, were in place.

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, with due respect, the Hon. Member knows not what he speaks. What we have done over the past few years during the course of federal-provincial meetings with Ministers

responsible for culture and historical resources on the provincial side has clearly not been to impose any new buildings on the Provinces, since in many cases the Provinces had to meet the operating requirements for these buildings. Any new buildings in the Provinces respecting the areas of arts and culture, unless they were indeed purely federal buildings, would only be built with the full co-operation of the Provinces.

The Province, for its own good reasons, and I am not disputing that it may have good reasons, has not wished to give priority to that sector at the present time.

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AGRICULTURE**NEW BRUNSWICK POTATO INDUSTRY**

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Madam Speaker, through you I would like to address a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Recently I raised a problem of the potato industry in the Province of New Brunswick. Has the Minister taken any steps to speed up application processing with positive answers from the Farm Credit Corporation? Has he taken any action with respect to the deferral of repayment of storable crop loans? Has he taken any action with respect to any possibility of price stabilization?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, to the first three parts of the question, yes; to the last part, no.

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL ACTION

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Very briefly, I would like to ask the Minister when can the potato farmers anticipate an answer. I would like to point out to him that a late answer is a non-answer and will be of no assistance. We have another week, Madam Speaker, to put them in business.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the provincial Minister of Agriculture and I were trying to set a meeting to decide what further action should be taken.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**ABANDONED RIGHTS OF WAY IN SASKATCHEWAN**

Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster): Madam Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Transport and ask him what progress has been made in the complete transfer of abandoned rail rights of way in the Province of Saskatchewan owned by Canadian National, rights of way which were to be turned over to the federal Government.