

Oral Questions

Mr. Crouse: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the minister for his remarks in welcoming me back to the House from the conference. I would point out that at the conference the USSR—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member has a supplementary question will he put it directly, please.

Mr. Crouse: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the strength of the negotiating teams of the USSR, the United States and other world powers at the conference, will the minister consider sending the Deputy Minister of External Affairs or a Deputy Minister of Fisheries or the Environment in order to equalize in strength the debating teams which other countries have placed in charge of their affairs at the conference?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to consider any worthwhile suggestion, but I am sure that my hon. friend would agree that the deputy head of our delegation, Ambassador Beasley, is one of the most competent personalities in the field of the law of the sea, and probably there is no other person at that level in the federal service of Canada with the same competence and experience. I have full confidence in his ability to represent Canada at the conference, but I will take into account the views of the hon. member in respect of any steps that can be taken to support his work.

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AGRICULTURE**POTATOES—POSSIBILITY OF ALTERATIONS IN SUPPORT PAYMENT PROGRAM**

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture, but in his absence perhaps I might address it to the acting minister who might take it as notice, if he so wishes. Is the minister in a position to state what alterations, if any, are being made to the program of support payments to potato growers in the Atlantic provinces? I am especially concerned, as are the growers, about the limitation of two carloads per grower. I am also concerned about the situation in respect of the growers, especially certified seed growers, who have sold all of their potatoes before April 1.

● (1420)

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Acting Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture today is meeting with the ministers of agriculture from all across Canada. The topic is the stabilization of agricultural prices. This meeting includes all the ministers of agriculture, with the exception of the minister from Newfoundland, who could not get here because of a snow storm. I should say it may be of interest to the hon. member to know that the Minister of Agriculture for Prince Edward Island appointed a man by the name of Mr. Faulkner to be the co-ordinator with the federal Department of Agriculture. I shall take the member's other question as notice.

[Mr. MacEachen.]

NATIONAL DEFENCE**TRANSFER OF PERSONNEL FROM WINNIPEG BASE—LOCATION OF AIR COMMAND HEADQUARTERS**

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. Over the past few months up to 125 servicemen have been transferred from the Canadian Forces base at Winnipeg to other bases in Canada. Is it the intention of the minister to reduce the Winnipeg base to a token force?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, it is four months since the minister announced the new air command would be located in western Canada. Will the minister be placing the air command in Winnipeg to partially make up for the transfer of these 125 men which has had an adverse effect on the economy of Manitoba?

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I have already advised the House that I will be receiving a recommendation from the chief of the defence staff and when I have that I will make an announcement.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS**POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER GRAIN HANDLERS' STRIKE—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. In view of the fact that it will be six months tomorrow since Bill C-12, the grain handlers strike bill, was passed by this House ordering grain handlers back to work, is the minister fully aware of the imminent possibility of a further grain handlers strike because neither the union nor management have signed an agreement pursuant to that order.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): No, I am not aware and I hope that can be avoided, Mr. Speaker.

REQUEST FOR EXPEDITING OF BAYDA COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Before the Easter recess the minister corrected an answer he gave while I was in the House but the correction was made after I left the House. He said that the Bayda commission report would not be received until possibly this summer. In view of the unfortunate circumstances which have developed on the west coast again, will the minister and the government now take steps to give all the necessary assistance to this commission to ensure that the report and recommendation will come forward much before next summer and in fact within the next few weeks.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member will appreciate that it is a very complex question Mr. Justice Bayda is looking into. This is the time frame he has set. We are giving him all the back-up he requests and are prepared to continue to do