

Oral Questions

REQUEST FOR PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, in light of the unusual circumstances here where the Government took away land from the original owners, some of whom had it in their families for generations, set up a Crown Corporation, and then had the Crown Corporation sell that land to the Government's own employees without giving the original owners an opportunity to bid, a reckless abuse of Government power, will the Minister not agree to make a special reference of all the information available respecting the sale by a Crown Corporation to six employees of that Crown Corporation of those lands? Will he make that information available now, immediately, so that the House of Commons can study each detail, including any representations or any record of representations made by Liberal Members of Parliament? Will he not do that now, immediately, so that the matter can be cleared up?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, the Right Hon. Member, having found that his legal position was not a position—

Mr. Clark: That is not true.

Mr. LeBlanc:—now goes into a supposed conspiracy of secrecy. The Crown Corporation in question is open to be examined in any committee, and I am quite willing and quite happy to recommend that this avenue be explored.

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AGRICULTURE

METRIC LABELLING OF FARM CHEMICALS

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture who is probably aware of the problems encountered by farmers as a result of metric labelling of farm chemicals. He has probably received representations from individuals, and I imagine recently he has received representations from the Ontario Farmers' Union. I would like to know the Minister's position with respect to metric labelling of farm chemicals.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member, I think, is referring again to representations made concerning dual labelling; they want it in both imperial and metric. We have written back to them stating our position, and I am sure that if my letters are available on other things I have written about, these also ought to be available.

Mr. Paproski: What is it?

Mr. Whelan: It says that we are considering some of the ramifications of dual labelling, including the danger of doing that if it is misinterpreted. Our officials are telling me that the danger is very great, as their studies show. Also, there are available small calculators with which people can immediately

translate metric into imperial and imperial into metric, whichever their machine is manufactured for.

Mr. Neil: Obviously the Minister does not credit the farmers with much intelligence when he says they might be confused about dual labelling.

REQUEST THAT REGULATIONS PERMIT DUAL LABELLING

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Madam Speaker, would the Minister be prepared to talk to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and ask him to change the regulations in order to ensure that there is dual labelling? This is what the farmers are asking.

• (1500)

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member says I am challenging the farmers' intelligence. Already 67 per cent of farmers have changed to metric. They lead the nation in the change. For years they have used metric when doctoring their animals. At the present time 85 or 87 per cent of all agriculture has changed to the metric system. Hon. Members opposite want us to take a retrograde step—to go backwards. Instead of stepping into the Twentieth Century they want us to go back to the Eighteenth Century. We do not intend to do that. Most of the farmers whom I know have the intelligence and know-how to use the metric system, and they are using it.

Hon. Members opposite point to mistakes in the metric system, but mistakes were made in the old imperial system which were just as bad as anything ever reported to me. In my career as Minister of Agriculture, in my career as a farm leader, and in my career as a farmer, I have used all these products on my own farm. If the Hon. Member opposite ever used any on his farm, I challenge him to show that they are not now used in a safer manner than they have ever been used in our lives.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITIONS

MR. GREENAWAY—OPPOSITION TO BILL C-85

Mr. Lorne Greenaway (Cariboo-Chilcotin): Madam Speaker, it is my duty to present a petition signed by 256 citizens of the interior region of British Columbia protesting Bill C-85. In addition, I have a Telex from the Peace River Regional Cattlemen's Association, representing 350 cattlemen, also voicing their opposition to Canagrex. Previously I presented a petition signed by 293 of my constituents on this issue.

The purpose of this petition is to express the clear and strong opposition of the citizens of British Columbia to Bill C-85, the