

Oral Questions

[English]

AGRICULTURE

WESTERN DROUGHT—FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture and is with regard to the drought relief proposals he made outside the House yesterday to the press. He said he would be moving water to livestock, moving feed to cattle, moving the cattle to pastures, monitoring livestock prices against overselling, and providing crop insurance where it is too dry to put seed in the ground.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Althouse: Can he tell us how the no seeding necessary to collect crop insurance scheme will work, and is it in effect at this moment?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that my hon. colleague is using some misrepresentations in reference to the conversations I had outside the House yesterday. I was not announcing details of a drought assistance program but simply carrying out a reasonable, common sense conversation with the interested members of the press about things that we would have to consider, common sense and logical things, aspects of a program that we would have to consider as a federal Government, as would our provincial counterparts, if indeed the situation developed into a full-blown drought.

● (1440)

MONITORING OF LIVESTOCK PRICING

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt—Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the monitoring of livestock pricing, can the Minister tell us what action if any will accompany this price monitoring system? Will the Government begin buying to hold the price up, and what has been the reaction of feedlot operators to this proposal?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, again I think the Hon. Member is putting the cart before the horse. We will have to consider all these aspects. We will not consider them in isolation. We will not act unilaterally. Rather, we will follow the same pattern we have followed since early February.

Matters of this kind will be worked out in consultation with our provincial counterparts and members of the drought committees. In fact, at our meeting in Calgary on Tuesday, during which I hope to schedule time to go out and view some of the affected areas, I am insisting that we have representatives of livestock groups and producer groups there.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

THINNING OF OZONE LAYER

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Is it true that Environment Canada has discovered a very substantial and significant thinning of the ozone layer over the Canadian Arctic? As well, can the Minister assure the House that the ozone layer treaty will be on the agenda of the economic summit meeting in Toronto next month?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that Government of Canada scientists and others have expressed great concern about the thinning of the ozone, both in the area the Hon. Member referred to and elsewhere. For example, there has been something like a 2 per cent to 3 per cent thinning in the ozone layer over the city of Toronto from 1976 to about 1983, the last year for which we have data in that particular case.

The Government of Canada will be raising at the G-7 summit, through the Prime Minister, the question of ozone depletion. In particular we will be urging the G-7 countries to ratify the Montreal protocol. We ourselves want to do so beforehand but are being prevented from ratifying because Liberal members of the Senate are holding up the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Until the Senate acts expeditiously, as the House of Commons has done, we are prevented from taking world leadership on a most important global problem.

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[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

OPPOSITION TO PURCHASE BY CANADA OF NUCLEAR SUBMARINES

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of National Defence, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday, we learned that 59 per cent of Canadians oppose the purchase of nuclear submarines. After more than a year of propaganda, the Conservative Government has not been able to convince the people that buying these submarines is a good deal. Is the Deputy Prime Minister prepared today to listen to the voice of the people and give up this ill-conceived policy?

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, there is quite a discrepancy in polls taken in the country these days. I have a poll here conducted by Angus Reid which indicates in April, 1988, 47 per cent supported the idea and 47 per cent opposed it. On April 20, 1988, Decima Research showed 42 per cent in favour of the initiative. When