

Oral Questions

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we announced government policy some months ago. At this time we have no intention of changing it. We said that we would leave it in effect at that time, and if the policy which was announced jointly by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and myself did not work, we would bring in an immediate import law. I am sure the hon. member is aware that there has been no change in that policy.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

REFUSAL OF BENEFITS TO CERTAIN PERSONS—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Gaston Clermont (Gatineau): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Does the minister intend to see to it that those who were denied unemployment benefits as a result of amendments made to the act which became effective on January 1, 1976, even though they have applied for the Quebec pension, will benefit from the ruling of the appeals division of the federal court to which the request was submitted by the three retired persons who reached 65 before January 1, 1976?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member is very happy today because he made representations to me in this connection. I have not yet had a chance to read the decision of the tribunal today, but as soon as I have done so I shall have to determine what procedure will have to be followed.

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● (1442)

[English]

GRAIN

SUGGESTION TRANSPORTATION RESPONSIBILITY REST WITH GRAIN COMPANIES

Mr. Frank Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. I take it from his earlier answer that he fully support the Wheat Board proposal to spend up to \$100 million of producers' money for grain cars.

As lost sales, deferred sales, demurrage and interest costs are well into the hundreds of millions of dollars so far this calendar year, and more and more the responsibility for faulty programming seems to be with the Canadian Wheat Board, I would ask the minister whether he has considered moving this transportation programming responsibility to the grain companies.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I made it clear, in answer to the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville, that my authorization was not required in relation to this

[Mr. Hargrave.]

particular decision by the Wheat Board. I think the hon. member's suggestion that somehow the grain companies could handle this transportation misses some points about the kind of co-ordination that is required in a major movement of a product such as grain. I have not given any serious consideration to the kind of transfer to which he referred.

Mr. Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker, in view of the situation at Vancouver, where we have seen ten or 12 vessels sitting around for the last two months, with no overtime being worked at any of the terminals, could the minister announce any new or innovative measures to assist our grain export program for the coming winter? It seems to be heading into a worse mess than last winter.

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear that at any time when we are shooting for the record or the limit of our capability to move grain, we will from time to time run into difficulties. Again this year, during the summer months when we had the capacity to move more grain, ships were not presenting themselves for loading. Now they are bunching in Vancouver, as happens quite chronically at this time of year and has done for many years, even years when we were shipping a rather light volume of grain. I refer to the very low periods of exports when there was a Conservative government in office and the difficulties which can be cited from the press at that time about the pile-up of ships, demurrage charges, and so on. That was, as I say, Mr. Speaker, when we were exporting 300 million and 400 million bushels of grain instead of the near-record volumes of 820 million and 850 million bushels we are exporting in these years.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

REPORT OF ADVISORY COUNCIL CONCERNING ADVANCEMENT IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the status of women and it concerns the Advisory Council on the Status of Women which reports to the minister.

As the minister and other members are aware, on a regular basis the advisory council has published an evaluation of the advancement of women in the public service. This year's report has been considerably delayed, and it now appears that the report itself has been sent to the Public Service Commission, or a number of copies, for comment and possible alteration or censorship. Was the minister consulted about this unusual procedure, has he asked for a copy of the report, and has he approved this?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I would, first of all, say I regret that the hon. member uses the provisions of section 43 to put on the record allegations of the nature he has made at a time when we are not in a position to immediately answer them.