

Oral Questions

than 100 head of cattle, would be a severe blow to small, provincially inspected plants which now have Agriculture Canada grading. Will the Minister look into the suggestion made by the Ontario Freezer Meat Association that the meat inspection branch have its provincial inspectors do the grading in plants at the time they do their inspection?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question of the Hon. Member, and I certainly appreciate his concern and the recommendation. I must, however, indicate, Mr. Speaker, that in the Provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia, I believe, we have federal-provincial agreements whereby we do share grading and inspection services. However, in the Province of Ontario the provincial plants are inspected under provincial jurisdiction and by provincial inspectors.

I met with the provincial Minister of Agriculture for the Province of Ontario this morning. He did not raise this issue. I share the Hon. Member's concern and, indeed, I can assure him that we will continue to work together so that we can maintain the high standard of inspection and grading. Perhaps we can even improve that system. By working together we will be able to work out some economies, both on the public and the private side.

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AGRICULTURE**MARITIME FARMERS' COUNCIL'S REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY FUNDING**

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. As the Minister knows, the pay-out annually under the Western Grain Transportation Act and the Western Grain Stabilization Program is about \$600 million. We on this side of the House certainly do not disagree with those expenditures. However, would the Minister explain the fairness, if you will, with regard to denying the request of the Maritime Farmers' Council for emergency funding in the amount of \$13.5 million?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I think that the Hon. Member must be greatly misinformed because at no time have I ever denied the request of the Maritime Farmers' Council with reference to additional feed freight assistance. We are having ongoing discussions with representatives of the Maritime Farmers' Council. At no time have I ever rejected such a worth-while and legitimate request.

TIMING OF DECISION

Mr. David Dingwall (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. I suggest to him that this inordinate delay in acting upon the request is tantamount to a refusal. In view of his previous statement, would the Minister undertake to assure this House by March 20 or March 25 that he will have a firm

commitment in writing for the Maritime Farmers' Council who are requesting a meagre \$13.5 million for emergency funding? Will the Minister give us that assurance?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would love to give such an assurance but, obviously, common sense would dictate that it would be impossible for me to provide it at this point in time.

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FISHERIES**CANADA-UNITED STATES SALMON TREATY**

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans admitted on the public record that the Canada-U.S. Salmon Interception Treaty went through Cabinet in 30 minutes. He admitted on the public record that it was riddled with problems but that the Prime Minister wanted it very badly. One of the Prime Minister's main concerns was how fast could the Cabinet get back to the Americans with it. Does the Deputy Prime Minister believe that this is the way for a responsible Government, or an independent nation, to make an international treaty? Does the Deputy Prime Minister believe that that is the appropriate way to make an international treaty?

Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, the appropriate way to make an international treaty is exactly the process which was followed in this case. After many years of negotiating, and after getting around the difficulties of two years ago when the American Senate was not prepared to accept the draft agreement which had then been reached, a negotiating team was set up which represented every user group on the west coast of British Columbia, and all interest groups. As a consequence of that, an agreement was reached. Under our parliamentary system it was then my responsibility to advise the Cabinet, the Government of our country, on whether or not that was an appropriate treaty to enter into. I took that responsibility and I gave that advice.

I say to the Hon. Member that this is not the American system. The United States has a republican democratic form of government. We have a parliamentary democratic form of government.

Mr. Skelly: I might say that this is the most offensive mechanism that I think any democracy has seen.

YUKON FISHERY

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): My supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Article 8 of the treaty says that Canada and the U.S. must reach a specific agreement on the Yukon fishery before the treaty comes into force. The Minister today in committee admitted that no such agreement was in place. Would the Deputy Prime Minister admit that the Government bungled this treaty and it is likely,