

Oral Questions

FINANCE

REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL OF TAX ON HYMN BOOKS

Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. As the vast majority of churches across Canada are maintained by voluntary public subscriptions of private individuals, and as the 7 per cent import duty on hymn books is creating hardship on already strained church budgets, will the minister consider withdrawing this tax, in the best interests of Canadians.

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I will want to look at that question.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

REFUSAL OF SNOWBIRDS TO ATTEND HAMILTON AIR SHOW—
REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Mr. Gus MacFarlane (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence. Is it correct that the Snowbirds have refused an invitation to appear at the International Air Show at Hamilton. If so, can the Canadian Heritage Warplanes Association anticipate that since the forces of other countries, such as the United States, will be in attendance, that some Canadian Armed Forces participation is possible.

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that the Snowbirds would add greatly to any event. I will have to check their schedule to see if they will be able to attend.

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MANPOWER

SHORTAGE OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS FOR PLANTING
SEASON—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO ALLEVIATE

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. As Canada Manpower will not allow farmers to hire foreign workers until after August 15, and as many farmers in southern Ontario are threatening to reduce or eliminate the production of several crops because they cannot get local help for the planting season, what new initiatives has the minister taken in order to alleviate this serious agricultural crisis?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the information conveyed to the hon. member is absolutely wrong. I have said many times that our priorities are to provide Canadians if Canadians are available and willing to take these jobs; that, failing that, and it sometimes happens, we have a formal program, which we introduced in the interest of farmers, with the West Indies and Mexico to bring in under contractual arrangements, formally arrived at, off-shore seasonal workers in quantities which will not create any problems for them. Only after that are we prepared to open up individual arrangements with foreign workers. If

[Mr. Danson.]

the farmers will co-operate with manpower offices in their areas or other areas of the country, they need not fear not having available people to work and harvest their crops.

Mr. Blackburn: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the minister's answer, how possible is it for farmers in southern Ontario and other parts of Canada to import through Canada Manpower offshore workers during the short planting season—because that is what I am talking about. I am not talking about the harvest; I am talking about the two to four week planting season when farmers find it difficult to get local help. Even though local helpers may be registered with manpower offices, they will not work in the fields. Let me make a suggestion: why cannot such farmers bring in offshore help on a temporary basis?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I wonder whether it is proper now to pursue a philosophical discussion about the approach which should be taken on this question. Perhaps the matter might best be settled privately between the hon. member and the minister.

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AGRICULTURE

POTATOES—REQUEST FOR PROGRESS REPORT ON AID
PROGRAM FOR PRODUCERS

Hon. J. A. MacLean (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Has he any progress to report about his discussions with the ministers of agriculture of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick concerning support for potato markets, or any diversion program, or whatever it is that he discussed with them.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we met with them yesterday evening and made four suggestions, three of which I believe they want to consider with their producers today in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island and let us know if they are acceptable.

● (1440)

POTATOES—REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF MARKETING STUDIES

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the continuing deterioration in the market place of table stock potatoes from these two provinces, and in light of the minister's earlier remarks about marketing studies that have been done by his department, has he yet released these studies or made any recommendations to either of these two provinces with regard to this fundamental issue?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we have had general discussions with the ministers of agriculture from both Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. Our findings have not been made public. We discussed the general content of what we should be doing about marketing. It appears they are both concerned about the way their product is being marketed and about whether they should be doing anything differently from