

Oral Questions

minister ascertain whether the estimated loss is valid and, if so, what reasonable explanation has the airline to offer for what would appear to be, on the face of it, the most lucrative airline route in Canada?

● (1130)

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think that is part of the policy we will announce eventually.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Which year?

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Hon. members still have a few days to laugh. It is good for their health.

We have to study the structure of air fares because there is no doubt that some short hauls are being subsidized by long hauls. We will have to revise all this to have a better equilibrium. Hon. members who always travel first class should know that they are subsidized by the economy class.

Mr. Nowlan: Only ministers travel first class.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): I sometimes meet my hon. friends in first class, but as we have a pass, it is cheaper for Air Canada to have ministers in first class because this is where there are seats available.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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LABOUR CONDITIONS**REASON FOR DELAY OF DECISION ON INQUIRY INTO ACTIVITIES OF SEAFARERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION**

Mr. Stan Schumacher (Palliser): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister in the absence of the Minister of Labour. Now that the government has received two reports on SIU activities, one from the Department of Justice and one from the Department of Labour, and in light of the statement of the Minister of Labour earlier this week to the effect that a decision on an inquiry will be made this week, why is the decision on such an inquiry now apparently being postponed until at least next week, and when can we expect this decision to be made?

Mr. Mark MacGuigan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. gentleman to be patient for a few more days.

Mr. Schumacher: I will ask the parliamentary secretary what ministers are involved in this discussion and if consideration will be given to making these reports public at the time the decision on the inquiry is announced.

Mr. MacGuigan: Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman will just have to await action by the government.

[Mr. Abbott.]

GRAIN**GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATION AS TO PRODUCTION**

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Justice in charge of the Wheat Board a question. He recommended that production of grain be increased this year, yet quotas have been cut off in May of this year. There is still much grain piled up on the farms and in storage space because of the dilly-dallying of the government over the labour difficulties at the ports. Is the minister now going to bring in another LIFT program next year?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that the hon. member for Calgary North recognizes that there is indeed grain in the country. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain does not seem to agree that either the statistics or the visible piles of grain are evidence of anything.

The quotas originally proposed for termination on May 16 in regard to the higher grades of wheat were in fact extended by the Canadian Wheat Board, so the open quota continues. There is generous space in most elevators, and farmers are delivering their grain to them. Our recommendation in regard to acreage was that a very significant increase in acreage and reduction in summer fallow should take place because of the relatively low world stocks of grain. Although there is still a fairly reasonable stock of Canadian grain. That continues to be our advice.

Mr. Woolliams: I would ask the minister to contact the wheat pools and the grain companies across this country to find out how much grain is stored in the elevators and on the farms at the present time. I ask seriously, is he going to reconsider his suggestion for more production in western Canada in light of the fact that one of the biggest crops of winter wheat is now beginning to be harvested in the United States?

Mr. Lang: No, Mr. Speaker. The figures on farm stocks and on stocks in elevators are available in the best possible way. The elevator stocks are of course literally available in actual numbers of bushels, and I read the statistics every week. Statistics Canada calculations of farm stocks have been borne out in the past as accurate. The good crop which is being harvested in the United States is in a sense welcome news from a world point of view. It remains a fact, however, that the world stocks of grain are relatively low, and this means that it would be desirable to improve grain stocks. What we want now, of course, is some recognition from the rest of the world after the experience of lower stocks, that the rest of the world should appreciate our carrying stocks.

As long as we were carrying a large stock, there was no appreciation of that, and it may have been a necessary exercise to see those stocks go a little lower before the world began to see that it should pay us for carrying stocks rather than offering to pay us lower prices when we carry that security for the rest of the world.