

AGRICULTURE

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCE PROGRAMS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. In view of the unprecedented crisis facing agriculture, particularly western grain farmers at the moment, why did the Minister of Agriculture not announce programs for this year at the same time as he made his belated announcement earlier today with regard to last year's western grain stabilization plan?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have a little difficulty following the logic of the Hon. Member's question, but perhaps that is not unique. A couple of hours ago my colleague, the Minister of State responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, announced the largest interim payment in the history of the country under the Western Grain Stabilization Act.

Mr. Axworthy: For last year's crops.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wise: For the benefit of my colleague, that was a payment of \$580 million. It was possible for us to make that interim payment because of a decision taken by this Party and this Government to amend the Act.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

WESTERN GRAIN INDUSTRY

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has told us that the payment was of that magnitude because of last year's situation. Now that we have the largest crisis in agriculture in the country, why will the Minister not announce what is needed for the western grain industry this year? What is he waiting for?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, in the last 18 months the Government has taken well over 200 initiatives—

Mr. Ouellet: No, no. Last week it was 100.

Mr. Wise: —which supplied over \$4 billion to the agri-food industry.

Mr. Ouellet: What happened over the weekend?

Mr. Wise: About \$2 billion of that was directed to western Canada. That is the record.

Mr. Boudria: It's a record of broken promises.

Mr. Wise: It's not a record of broken promises. If anyone is an expert on broken promises, it is the Hon. Member who sits across the way.

Oral Questions

PETRO-CANADA

SENATE COMMITTEE EVIDENCE

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy. The Minister has frequently stated that the oil companies should be reducing prices and giving consumers a break. How can he explain the evidence of George and Cora McAra of Gravenhurst, Ontario, who today told a Senate committee that Petro-Canada not only padlocked their gas pumps when they tried to lower prices, but was in fact, in a general way, forcing prices up rather than down?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I cannot add to the answer which I have given before to that Member in this House. This is an issue between Petro-Canada and its agents with which it has contracts. I suggest that the Member address his question to Petro-Canada.

[Translation]

INQUIRY HOW GOVERNMENT WILL HELP CONSUMERS

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. How does the Government intend to help consumers, if it removes the petroleum revenue tax and in its stead introduces a tax of two or three cents per litre of gas for the refineries, as reported in the press?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): That is not true, Mr. Speaker.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

ASSISTANCE FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUPS—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, about official languages: "Alliance Quebec and Francophones outside Quebec criticize Ottawa's failure to act"; "Ottawa has failed to consult us on reforms: language minorities"; "Bilingualism: exasperation with Ottawa's hesitant attitude". Here is my question, Mr. Speaker.

When is this Government going to deal with the problems that concern official language minority groups, and when can we expect some solutions to the problems in Newfoundland regarding access to French in the courts; in Ontario, regarding French television; in Manitoba, regarding services in French, and throughout the province, regarding education and Section 23? When is this Government going to act?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague is aware, a full review is being made at this time of the Official Languages Program that was set up in both languages. The Task Force that is