

answering the question. The question is why is the Prime Minister permitted to have a \$68 million prison built in his riding when the Auditor General says it is not needed, while at the same time 25 other capital projects in Correctional Service have been cancelled? Answer the question. How can you justify the Prime Minister's prison while at the same time cancelling the other projects?

Hon. James Kelleher (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as usual the Hon. Member does not have his facts straight. What the Auditor General was saying was that he was concerned about the location. He never at any point said there was not a need for a new prison in Quebec. As a matter of fact, it was that Hon. Member's Government which decided there should be a new prison in Quebec, at Drummondville. What we did was to build it in Port-Cartier to alleviate a socio-economic problem in that area which required attending to.

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AGRICULTURE

GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS TO GRAIN FARMERS

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. He knows about the cash flow problems most farmers are having. Canadian grain farmers are expecting to receive the final deficiency payment, and western grain farmers expect to receive the western grain stabilization interim payment this spring. Can the Deputy Prime Minister tell us if the Government will be making these payments before seeding begins so that farmers can pay for their essential supplies?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I can only tell the Hon. Member and the House that these payments will be made soon.

LOW PRICES—GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, if those payments are not too late they will help with the seeding. However, future cash flow depends on the return from grain generally. Will the Government give western farmers some commitment that there will be some special assistance to counter the low prices for grains being suggested for the next crop year?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture said in this House on many occasions that he is meeting with the leaders of the farm organizations, has been meeting with them, and the method by which the payment under the \$1 billion Special Grains Program is being distributed was arrived at during the course of those discussions and consultations. I think there is a recognition that there will be a serious shortfall and to that end the Minister and leaders of

the farm communities are going to be looking at various ways and means to determine how that might be offset.

I am pleased that the Hon. Member and his Party have finally come around to supporting the \$1 billion special grain initiative. When it was announced they certainly did not seem to be very much onside and it is nice to know that we have their support now.

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FINANCE

PROPOSED BUSINESS TRANSFER TAX—TAX REFORM WHITE PAPER

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, in the February, 1986, Budget the Minister of Finance promised to table at an early date what he called a concrete proposal on the business transfer tax. That promise was not fulfilled in 1986. In the February, 1987, Budget he repeated this promise and said that it would be included in the comprehensive tax reform proposals.

Will the Minister of State for Finance advise the House of a date he will table his long-promised White Paper on tax reform, and will it include his proposal for a business transfer tax?

• (1500)

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I cannot announce that on behalf of the Minister of Finance. He will announce it in due course, but he has indicated that he hopes to do that before the House rises in June.

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF BUSINESS TRANSFER TAX

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, many people are concerned about the Government's lack of policy in this respect. Furthermore, the delay is creating all kinds of problems. Could the Minister inform the House whether the new business transfer tax will include goods such as food and essential commodities? In other words, will the business transfer tax announced by the Minister apply, as some people have said it will, to bread, milk and doctors' fees?

[English]

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is rehearsing his arguments against this tax before it has even been introduced. Those arguments can be put when the tax is suggested, if it ever will be.

Mr. Gauthier: "If it ever will be", oh!