

Oral Questions

bit naive when he thinks that in some cases toxic substances can be removed. It takes a long time before they move from the Great Lakes to the ocean and are diluted.

On the matter of phosphates, Canada has been one of the leading nations in their elimination. We are considering imposing more stringent requirements, but we also have to look at the improvement of waste treatment plants to make sure that phosphates do not escape to the ocean by way of the Great Lakes.

Mr. Blackburn: Mr. Speaker, the minister said there were some areas of the Great Lakes which have shown improvement as far as pollution is concerned. Could he be a little more specific? Where are those areas?

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): Mr. Speaker, I would have to look at the report, which I do not have in front of me, but the shores in certain areas have improved very considerably.

Mr. Blackburn: Where?

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): In many cases it will take time—and it is taking time—before visible improvements are seen. But there is no increased deterioration in most areas of the Great Lakes.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A BRANCH LINE FROM MONTREAL TO MIRABEL

Mr. Jacques Lavoie (Hochelaga): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of Transport.

Since it is possible that the Marathon project could be carried out on the site of Angus shops, a co-operative residential and commercial project, and since the existing railway could become a link between eastern Montreal and Mirabel, could the minister tell the House whether he intends to draw the attention of the Canadian Pacific to the possibility of considering that connection between Mirabel and eastern Montreal which could contribute at the same time to the economic development of that underprivileged area of Montreal?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am not looking at this particular project at this point in time, but I would be glad to take the hon. member's representations into account.

[Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent).]

TRANSPORT

PROPOSED INCREASE IN TOLLS ON WELLAND CANAL— GOVERNMENT POSITION

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. It has to do with the negotiations which are going on with the United States in connection with Welland Canal tolls, an increase of which would simply strike another body blow at the western farmer at a time when farm income is going down very materially. Will the minister take a stand on behalf of the western farmer, and of Canada in general, against an increase in these rates at this time?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we are having discussions about the sensible approach to the handling of the seaway which would allow for the goods moving through it to pay, basically, for the operating and maintenance costs of that seaway and a very marginal return over that. We have cancelled the overdue interest, which was never paid after the arrangement which the right hon. gentleman preferred but was never followed through. The right hon. gentleman should not assume that because of any very marginal impact upon the grain farmer as one of the shippers through this facility there is any lessening of my determination to do all kinds of things to assist him. We are working for him, but it will not necessarily be in a silly way, such as trying to deal with the tolls in a very special manner.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, judging by the minister's answer it is obvious that he is pressing for an increase in the tolls, and the United States is holding back. In an outspoken speech the other night the Minister without Portfolio pointed out that the western farmer had not been protected until he crossed the Rubicon. Has the Minister of Transport consulted his confrere, the Minister without Portfolio, and has he found that the Minister without Portfolio has changed the views he expressed so strongly for so long against increasing these rates?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I think the House will find that all of us on this side share the view that the continuation of and an increase in the number of things which can be done for the west and for the farmer will take place in important areas. We will not quibble and attempt to make it seem that one particular bit of bad management really helps him. I assure the right hon. gentleman that I am delighted to see the 25 per cent increase in our strength between Winnipeg and Kamloops which came about when the Minister without Portfolio joined this government. The right hon. gentleman knows well that that is going to add to our strength now and in the future.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, that will be fine solace for the western farmer, who is being struck another blow by the minister. Did the Minister of Transport read what the Minister without Portfolio said the other day at the Stanfield—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!