

Oral Questions

procedure had to be hastened. I think that 80 to 90 per cent of the projects have already been accepted.

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[English]

GRAIN**POSSIBILITY OF INCREASE IN PRICE OF WHEAT SOLD FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION**

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question, if I can wake him up, is for the Minister of Agriculture.

An hon. Member: Cheap!

Mr. Nystrom: It goes to him in the absence of his friend, the Minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. It is now four years since the minimum price for wheat sold for domestic consumption was set at \$3.25 a bushel and it is several months since his friend the Minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board said this price was being reviewed by the cabinet with a view to its upward adjustment. Can the hon. gentleman now assure us that the hard-pressed farmers will receive an increase in the price of the wheat they sell for domestic consumption?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): I am not in a position to give the hon. member the assurance he seeks because no decision has yet been taken. I want to assure him however, that even asleep I am as bright as he is, wide awake.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nystrom: Can the minister assure that any increase in the price of wheat in this country will reflect at least the cost of production which the farmers have encountered in the last four years? Further, can he tell us when an announcement will be forthcoming?

Mr. Whelan: With the Western Grain Stabilization Act, crop insurance and so on, the grain producers of western Canada are better taken care of than any group of cereal producers I know of anywhere. I work very closely with the Minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board and I know he is as concerned as we are to look after the interests of western Canadian farmers as well as of Canadian consumers.

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POST OFFICE**REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE OF MAIL NOT PERMITTED**

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Postmaster General who in response earlier to questions by the Leader of the Opposition and by my hon. friend from Brandon-Souris left the distinct impression that there had been no interference, legal or otherwise, with the

mail except in one particular case which had been disclosed. We look to the minister for very little, but we do look to him to protect the mail and I ask him whether he will check to satisfy himself that there has been no interference by any security service, including his own staff. We have all these revelations by the Solicitor General that there has been illegal interference. I ask the minister to satisfy himself and report to the House so that we may know in this country that there is not going to be government surveillance of the mail.

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General): I hasten to give the hon. gentleman that assurance. I take my responsibilities very seriously and section 43 of the Post Office Act is very clear. The information the hon. gentleman brought to my attention through his leader arose out of a program which was broadcast last night. I have conducted an investigation with my head of security and investigation at this time, and I have received the reply that there has been no departure from the policy I have described. I am not responsible for the RCMP.

● (1502)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blais: I have said quite clearly that I have conducted an investigation in my department with my officials, and I have been advised as I stated earlier in the House.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. It is an incredible proposition that the Postmaster General puts before us today. Is he telling the House that the Solicitor General did not have the courtesy to tell him about the illegal interceptions of mail on the part of the RCMP Police; and is he also saying that he has no responsibility to deal with other security services as the protector of the public mails? Is he saying that he has no responsibility in this regard?

Mr. Blais: I have the responsibility, Mr. Speaker, of making sure that the provisions of the Post Office Act are honoured. I am taking that responsibility. I have indicated to the hon. gentleman that I have conducted a preliminary investigation with the head of my security and investigation department this morning. I have also undertaken to the hon. gentleman to pursue these investigations and to provide to the House any information that might come to my attention in the normal course.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I put a very simple question to the Postmaster General. I want to know whether he will first undertake to speak to his cabinet colleagues to ensure that there is no unlawful interference with the mails; and will he not now undertake to make a statement on motions at the earliest possible date on his findings in regard to interference with the mails of this country?

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I have indicated to the hon. gentleman that I will be pursuing the matter, that indeed I have had a preliminary investigation conducted by the head of security. I have told him that there is no information other than what I