

Oral Questions

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, the exact details of the eventual arrangements are subject to detailed negotiation to ensure as a government, on behalf of the workers of Massey-Ferguson, the 300 suppliers and 300 dealers—the small businesses which my friend on the Conservative side forgot about when he asked me a question a few minutes ago—that we have in place commitments with respect to investment, production and research and development, commitments we will insist on having in place as a condition of making available, along with the government of Ontario, the guarantee of equity that we mentioned yesterday. I do not think my hon. friend would want me to prejudice the type of outcome of negotiations which he is calling for by making some premature disclosure of details which will harm our negotiating position. I also want to say that the position we are taking is the kind that has been very strongly called for by the UAW representing the workers at Massey.

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WATER RESOURCES

SKAGIT RIVER VALLEY—REFERENCE BY B.C. GOVERNMENT OF U.S. PROPOSAL TO FLOOD TO INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. As the minister knows, the province of British Columbia has now referred the question of the American proposal to flood the Canadian Skagit river valley in British Columbia to the International Joint Commission. I ask the minister why there has not yet been any move on the part of the federal government to support that initiative on the part of the province of British Columbia.

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, negotiations have been ongoing in this matter between American and city authorities and British Columbia. Our position is well known. We have never been enthusiastic about this project but there is, after all, an agreement involving the province of British Columbia. We believe it is for the province of British Columbia to face up to its responsibility and to attempt to change the minds of the U.S. signatories in this respect.

Mr. Fraser: Madam Speaker, the minister knows that has not been the position of the federal government for ten years. If that is now the position of the federal government, the federal government is leaving the province of British Columbia in an extraordinarily difficult position in dealing with the United States of America. The minister has been very brave about trying to cover up on the messy and seamy side of the Canadian arrangements.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fraser: I want to know now, is the Government of Canada prepared, after all these years, finally to get on the side of British Columbia and tell the American government that their order is invalid, that the order is not fair and that we

will not have our valley flooded? Are we going to get an answer or is the minister going to run for cover?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacGuigan: Madam Speaker, the position of the government has been consistent; we believe this problem should be settled by negotiation. We have consistently offered our good offices to assist the province of British Columbia in that regard.

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CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

POSSIBLE IMPOSITION OF DUTY ON SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT

Mr. Lorne Greenaway (Cariboo-Chilcotin): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of State for Science and Technology, I shall address my question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. This government has agreed to carry on the funding to universities for scientific research, but we understand they are thinking about imposing a duty on the importation of scientific equipment and supplies. Can the minister assure us that this will not happen, because there is not much use increasing funding for research to universities if we are going to slap a tax on their imported machinery.

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I think my friend is referring to a recent report of the tariff board after it held hearings into this matter. If I am not mistaken, the report is presently under study by my colleague, the Minister of Finance.

OTTAWA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF ADEQUATE FACILITIES

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Meetings are being held today between Eastern Airlines and the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Municipality executives relative to future direct flights between Ottawa International Airport and the United States. Any decision, however, hinges on agreement by the minister of immigration to having proper customs facilities put in place. Will the minister assure us that such facilities are forthcoming, thereby saving Ottawa from the shame of presently being one of the few international capitals with no direct flights to its largest neighbour and most important market?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I will be pleased to do anything I can to get Ottawa better air service. We are certainly keeping abreast of those negotiations. When the time comes to make a decision concerning immigration facilities, we will certainly be prepared to respond, but we have to wait and see what the negotiations with the airlines result in first.

Mr. Fretz: Madam Speaker, will the minister consult with his colleague, the Minister of Transport, to get his support so