

Oral Questions

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for St. Boniface is Minister of State without Portfolio and indeed he will have a very important responsibility in the cabinet expressing the points of view of the very important western provinces.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

EFFECT OF ROSEAU RIVER PROJECT IN UNITED STATES ON
MANITOBA—NEGOTIATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION AND
PAYMENT OF MITIGATING WORKS

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Prime Minister following a question I asked him last December 7 with regard to the Roseau River project in the state of Minnesota and its effect on the province of Manitoba. It is possible that the Minister of State from St. Boniface has also directed this question to the Prime Minister. The IJC specifically recommended that mitigating works take place in Manitoba prior to the completion of the work in Minnesota. At that time the Prime Minister indicated to me that he would be making inquiries as to the negotiations and the payment for these mitigating works. Have these negotiations taken place and, if so, what is the result?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I will have to check the file again and also check with my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Certainly, the IJC report supports the Canadian contention that some of these works are undesirable.

Mr. Epp: Can the Minister of the Environment indicate whether negotiations have taken place between U.S. and Canadian officials and whether mitigating works and the scheduling and payment for them has already been decided upon?

Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent): The report was officially transmitted to the two governments only some days ago. I will check to ascertain what contacts have continued since then.

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GRAIN

REASON FOR LOW FINAL PAYMENT TO FARMERS AND
RETENTION OF MONEY BY WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Arnold Malone (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. Why was the final payment to prairie farmers by the Canadian Wheat Board so low, and what is the justification for individual farmers not receiving a statement with their final payment indicating the full rationale for the amount of money retained by the Wheat Board?

[Mr. Hnatyshyn.]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the hon. member thinks he is referring to when he speaks about the retention of money by the Canadian Wheat Board. The final payments are, of course, on the basis of the Wheat Board's calculation of the amount of money received when grains from a particular pool have been sold and deducting therefrom the initial payments which have already been made to the farmer at the time of delivery. In due course the Wheat Board does put together and make available to all producers a full statement showing the analysis of the costs and its full calculations, and I think there is no reason to suspect or think that there is any different procedure followed this year than in years past. In other words, the level of the final payment reflects exactly the prices at which the Wheat Board was able to sell grain.

• (1500)

Mr. Malone: Why is it that the individual farmer, on receipt of his final payment, is not able to find out the basis upon which that final payment is made? Putting it on the basis of the whole Wheat Board region does not give the individual farmer an opportunity to make an analysis of his business because that is across the three prairie provinces.

Mr. Lang: If the hon. member has some suggestion about a better way of communicating the individual situation to a farmer, I am sure the Canadian Wheat Board would be glad to receive that representation from him. The board does make available to the farmers of the prairies a statement of its operations and the manner of calculating the final payments. There is no such thing as an individual payment tracing the particular wheat which one farmer delivered and identifying the market into which it went, and I hope the hon. member is not suggesting that the Wheat Board try to set up that kind of system.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

LOSS OF CHEQUES SENT TO CLAIMANTS IN SARNIA AREA—
REQUEST FOR REPORT

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Has the hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton brought to the minister's attention the fact that about 400 cheques worth several thousands of dollars which were addressed to claimants in the Sarnia area and which were sent by the Unemployment Insurance Commission have gone astray, and if so, has the minister been able to locate the cause of the problem?

Hon. Jack Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton did bring that to my attention because the hon. member always does a great job, and I got on it right away.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!