

Mr. Whelan: Madam Speaker, if everything goes as smoothly as we hope, well, that could be possible.

DETAILS OF PROGRAM

Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Is my understanding of what he just said to the hon. member for Saskatoon West correct, that the government is considering paying compensation for the embargo to grain farmers for grain produced and consumed in Canada?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I never made any mention of grain being consumed in Canada or being sold outside Canada. The hon. member will have to wait and see our submission and how we figured it out. It will all be made public once a government decision is made.

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AGRICULTURE

HERD MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same minister. It concerns his responsibility for the herd maintenance program in western Canada. I understand the minister still carries some responsibility for that program. Madam Speaker, we have been told that snow was a criteria for rainfall. The appeal board has advised the minister that snow should be removed. I am asking the minister how the cattle producers of western Canada can feed their cattle on Liberal promises and snowballs, after March 31 when funding has been cut off?

● (1500)

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows how fat an animal can get on snowballs and Liberal promises. But he also knows how fat they can get on Conservative wind, as far as that goes.

Some hon. Members: Order!

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PRIVILEGE

MR. RAE—ACCESS TO INFORMATION RESPECTING PUBLIC FUNDS—RULING BY MADAM SPEAKER

Madam Speaker: On Wednesday last the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood (Mr. Rae) raised a question of privilege with respect to the matter of distribution of grants in constituencies represented by members on the government side and by members of the opposition. I might point out that this is a political, not a procedural, problem. Several members of the House have acknowledged that it was not a question of

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privilege, as I think the hon. member for Broadview-Greenwood did. In the course of his remarks the hon. member asked me to comment on the wisdom of a practice which appears to discriminate against opposition members.

I was also asked by members to comment on a ruling of Mr. Speaker Jerome, dated December 10, 1979, which was referred to on several occasions. In this regard I want to say that I agree with the principle of that ruling, which stated in part that:

—the support of public funds, where applied to parliamentary activities ought . . . to apply across the floor of Parliament.

I have no hesitation in stating that I have no quarrel with this part of the ruling, and I will apply it when it has relevancy.

In his ruling Mr. Speaker Jerome offered certain comments which were also mentioned in the House last Wednesday. Whatever reasons Mr. Speaker Jerome had for commenting, not ruling, on the wisdom of a certain practice, the comments are separate and apart from matters of order or privilege.

As I said in my observations of last Wednesday:

I would hesitate to comment on situations which are not clearly put to me for a ruling to be made.

In other words, I shall do my duties as required under the rules to determine questions of order or privilege. But I would be going beyond my duties of applying procedural rules if I were to comment on my predecessor's remarks or on matters not procedural. That, of course, I cannot do.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

PETITIONS

MR. FLIS—PATRIATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parkdale-High Park): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table 4,000 petitions from constituents and others supporting the proposed resolution to patriate the Constitution with an amending formula and a charter of rights and freedoms, including in that charter of rights the concept of multiculturalism.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. D. M. Collenette (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1,645, 1,970, 2,030 and 2,054.