

Oral Questions

Hon. Member knows, fairly well, the contribution which farmers' wives have made. We have passed special laws and regulations for the Farm Credit Corporation giving them equal rights.

REPORTED RESPONSE BY MINISTER

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): I am sorry, the Minister did not choose to answer, because my information, and I hope he will correct me if I am wrong, is that he has communicated to his colleagues saying he was unable to support these changes at the time, and went on to say, "I did not say anything in Cabinet or Caucus but this is one of the roughest issues yet. They are mad." This is on his ministerial letterhead. I ask seriously, was this simply an expression as a private Member of Parliament concerned about his constituents, as I am concerned about mine, or is that the official position of the Minister of Agriculture of this Government?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I misunderstood what the Hon. Member said. I thought he said "from organized farmers, or farmers' organizations." We have received several letters from people concerned about what my colleague has stated, et cetera, and we have answered those letters.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

POSSIBILITY OF LAYING CHARGES AGAINST FORMER RCMP CORPORAL

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Early in November, only as a result of prodding, the Solicitor General asked the Minister of Justice for an opinion on whether ex-RCMP Corporal James Morrison of the Security Service could be charged for betraying, for money, a potential Canadian agent to the Soviets. Twice since then the Minister of Justice has stonewalled my questions in the House. Now, two and a half months after the matter was put in his hands for an opinion, could he tell us whether Morrison is to be charged and, if not, why not?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I have to admit that I have not yet received an opinion from the Department on that to forward to the Solicitor General. I appreciate the interest of the Hon. Member and I will press the Department again for action on this matter. Perhaps there may still be facts which are not available to them to enable them to complete their opinion.

FORGING OF FORMER SOLICITOR GENERAL'S SIGNATURE

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is about a clear case of forgery of a former Solicitor General's signature to documents

of which the Minister, I understand, has full knowledge because of briefings which have occurred. Can he also tell us if any consideration is being given to a prosecution in relation to the forging on documentation, purportedly official Canadian Government documentation, of a signature of a previous Solicitor General?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker, I have myself recently asked the question whether this is covered by decisions which have already been made, or whether this is a matter which we still have to decide. I still do not have an answer to that question.

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RAILWAYS

CROWSNEST PASS RATE—CONDITIONS PREREQUISITE TO CHANGE

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister and is with regard to Government policy on changes to the Crow rate. The much touted ministerial announcement on the Crow rate which was slated for last Friday in Winnipeg, was cancelled with no real explanation.

● (1450)

Since the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee voted an overwhelming seven to two to reject the Gilson proposal, which I submit accurately reflects producer opinion since they were just elected last month by grain producers all across the Wheat Board Region, would the Prime Minister tell the House if the Government has now decided to interpret correctly the overwhelming opposition to the Crow change proposals, and does the Government now recognize that the consensus among farmers, which the Prime Minister has always claimed would be a first condition to any Crow change, does not in fact exist?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, the situation in the West is rather special. We have the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture which could not make up its mind and decided to go back to a previous version of its policy. We have the Manitoba Farm Bureau which is in favour of the Gilson approach. Then we have Unifarm which is in favour of the Argue approach. They all met the other day at the Western Agricultural Conference and their first vote was 17 in favour of the Argue approach, 11 for the Gilson approach, and five abstained. Then the next day they had another vote and decided to leave it to the Government to make the decision.

Mr. Althouse: Madam Speaker, I think that answers the allegation that there is no consensus, but it does not answer the question about what is the Government's policy.