

Oral Questions

year. If he is asking us not to make a political appointment, I take it he is excluding himself from that and taking himself out of the running.

• (1440)

UNITED STATES' EXPORT SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): The Minister talks about taking people out of this appointment. Will he give a commitment that he is taking the Hon. Member for Lisgar out of the running, because it will be a very divisive appointment with western Canada farm groups, if he proceeds with it.

We have heard about the Minister's fights with the Wheat Board. Will he stand behind the Wheat Board against the United States' subsidy program in its million tonne sale to China, and not capitulate in the manner he did on the Durum wheat sale to Algeria? That is what western farmers wish to know.

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): It is obvious from the import of the question that the Hon. Member knows very little about what goes on in western Canada. First, the offer to China has only been an offer. To date we do not know that it has been accepted. In the meantime, Hon. Members should know that Canada will probably increase the amount of wheat sold to China this year. We did not capitulate in the Durum wheat deal with Algeria. We will probably sell the same amount of Durum wheat to Algeria as we did last year.

The Canadian Wheat Board, with our system of grading through the Canada Grain Commission, is serving Canada extremely well in some very difficult times. We are looking at increasing the amount of grain exported this year, as a result of the manner in which those two institutions operate, and the manner that the Government is supporting those two institutions.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

FUTURE OF RURAL POST OFFICES

Mr. Mel Gass (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, rumours have been running rampant throughout rural Canada that rural post offices are to be closed and that rural mail delivery will be eliminated. These rumours are being spread by the Opposition, and some employees of Canada Post. Rural residents are concerned about these rumours and wish some clarification of the Government's intentions regarding Canada Post's corporate plan.

Will the Minister assure the House and rural Canadians that wholesale closures of rural post offices are not being considered?

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): I wish to thank the Hon. Member for his interest in the matter. Earlier in the past month the plan was examined and recommendations issued by a Standing Committee, which recommendations have been implemented in the plan. The facts are quite different from the propaganda campaign calling for a wholesale closure of post offices in rural Canada. The Canada Post Corporation has advised me that it has no intention of closing any rural post offices in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Côté (Langelier): I might add that the Corporation will not start any change in the service before it consults both with the Members and the population. I can assure the Hon. Member that this will happen.

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SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH TAX CREDIT

HOLSTEIN CATTLE RESEARCH PROJECT

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. Can the Minister explain his Department's uncharacteristic flexibility to Dreamstreet's \$22.5 million scientific research tax credit program? This company was doing research to see whether black and white Holsteins would produce better milk, and more milk, than red and white Holsteins. It has been allowed to continue its activities into this taxation year. Why is the Government giving this company such flexibility?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue): I appreciate my colleague's interest in this particular matter which is a residue of the infamous SRTC program. As Members realize, I cannot talk about intimate details of any taxpayer's business in the House of Commons any more than to say that in some cases these enterprises are grandfathered out of a sense of fairness. They are scrutinized very carefully by the Department in the interest of the taxpayers of Canada. I will be pleased to give him more information privately, if it is proper.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): My supplementary question is this. The Minister's Department supplied the letter that allowed Dreamstreet to carry on its activities after the Government had announced that it was closing down the SRTC program. Surely the Government cannot have it both ways. It cannot shovel money out under the SRTC program while cutting back on legitimate research through the NRC and universities, and still allow an outfit that is essentially owned by a tax shelter in the United States to grab more Canadian tax dollars.