

Oral Questions

meat situation. There have been discussions recently with provincial Ministers and four of them agreed in principle to a so-called tripartite red beef stabilization program. The Minister is on record as saying two years ago that something could be done. I wonder if he would be prepared to tell us what stage the discussions are at now, and when we can look forward to the introduction of legislation in the House that will facilitate matters.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Hon. Member is aware of the meeting held here in Ottawa on February 9 with some Ministers. In fact every province was represented. They are not in unanimous agreement about how the plan should work, but there was enough feeling of support there that I have instructed my officials to go ahead with the legislation. We had a meeting about it this morning and they are proceeding with the draft legislation at the present time. The date they have set for approval and, hopefully, for a signing function by the provincial Ministers and myself, is in July of this year.

STATUS OF DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Mr. Speaker, if I understand the Minister correctly, that means that a plan will be in place by July 1. If that is the case, when will it take effect? Will it be in effect in time for the fall crop of calves? Could the Minister bring us up to date on the state of the discussions with the various sectors involved? We are talking about a hog plan and two separate plans in the beef industry, one for the calf operation and one for slaughter calves. Could the Minister bring us up to date on those discussions?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the pork producers are almost unanimous across Canada; sheep people are as well; cow-calf people are, but the big problem is in the finished cattle sector, whether it would be for this year. It is a tripartite type of agreement. It has not been agreed whether it would be for this year or not, but we hope it would be paying for the calendar year 1984.

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HEALTH

RESEARCH INTO LONG-RANGE AIR POLLUTION

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The Minister recently agreed to an amendment to the preamble to the Canadian Health Act which included the insight that we will only bring about improvements in the wellbeing of Canadians if we address the environmental causes of disease, as well as other causes of disease. I wonder if the Minister could tell the House how she reconciles that legitimate perception with the fact that a request for \$1.2 million to continue studies on the health effects of long-range air pollution has been rejected by her Department? Is she aware of this rejection and, if so, did she support it? If she is not aware of it,

what will she do to make sure that this kind of important research continues?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the problem of limited resources is well known, particularly in fields like the one for which I have responsibility. It is true that at the last banking date we could not find that sum of money. It means competition with programs such as the creation of the first native health professionals career program, which I thought must have top priority for the health status of Canadians. You simply have to weigh priority. There is an interdepartmental committee on an acid rain program, to fight air pollution, that is now working with my officials to try to find, through other public and even private sources, funds for the continuation of this study. My Department will analyse the data collected in the first four years of the program.

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, it would appear that, along with others, the Minister is trying to find money to continue this research. That is a good thing and I hope she is successful. May I say to her that it is not a question of trading off a program that she suggested, with the one that I mentioned. This kind of research is very important and ought to be structured into the long-range plans of the Department of National Health and Welfare. When she gets around to doing that we will be completely satisfied.

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the question was, exactly, in the second representation made by the Hon. Member. The fact is that the data collected up to now will be analysed by my Department and we hope that other stages of the program of research will take place. I think it is better to consider this as a temporary disruption of funding more than the cutting off of funds forever.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

NATIVE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FUND

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. His predecessor, who is now the Secretary of State for External Affairs, with great fanfare in 1981 announced that he was creating a \$345 million fund to develop Indian businesses. May I ask the Minister how many loans have been given from that fund since 1981?

● (1200)

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this question should more properly be addressed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. I am not responsible for the administration of the loans and of the fund.