

FARM INCOME—ACCRUAL ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I also wish to direct a question to the Minister of Finance.

Yesterday the Minister claimed that the recommendations made by the Finance Committee were just little changes over his White Paper proposal. However, I wish to inform the Minister that a number of those so-called "little" changes, if adopted, will have a dramatic effect on the way farmers do their business.

I wish to ask the Minister through you, Mr. Speaker, if he is now prepared to accept the committee's recommendation and abandon his unfair and costly proposal for a modified accrual accounting system.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am going to give the Hon. Member the same answer as I have given to other questioners.

The Finance Committee, of which he is a member, has spent a good deal of time reviewing the White Paper and coming up with a series of recommendations that have benefited from consultation with a wide number of people in the country.

I think it would be quite inappropriate for me to comment individually on each question on a specific item as they come up, but rather to provide the House with a blanket response at the time that the Ways and Means Motion is tabled in December.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out to the Minister that many farmers are experiencing a tremendous amount of insecurity. The Minister's proposals found in the White Paper created further insecurity and confusion.

I urge the Minister to correct this uncertainty and confusion that exist out there in order that farmers can start planning their activities for next year, come clean and clear to them and announce as soon as possible that he will not proceed with those silly proposals that came out of the Department of Finance that make no sense at all to the farmers of our country.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think that all I can say is that I take what the Hon. Member has said as a representation in support of the proposals in the committee report. I have stated that I will be making my response in December.

Oral Questions

AGRICULTURE

NEW BRUNSWICK POTATO GROWERS—REQUEST FOR STABILIZATION PAYMENT

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture.

In the House on August 14 I asked the Minister what progress had been made on the issue of an equalization payment for the 1985 potato crop. At that time the Minister assured me that he would likely be in a position in the near future to make a positive announcement.

The near future has come and gone, and the New Brunswick potato farmers are still waiting for action from the Government. What positive news can the Minister deliver to potato farmers today?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the continuing efforts and representations made on behalf of the potato producers of this country by my colleague from Fundy—Royal.

I ask the Hon. Member to appreciate the fact that, because of the income situation of Canadian farmers, it has been necessary for the Government to increase its funding to my Department and to the farmers of Canada by 350 or 400 per cent.

It is not always possible to have all the money when it is wanted. But I do wish to assure the Hon. Member and the potato farmers of Canada that it is still a priority on my mind, and I hope to be in a position at some reasonable point in the future to respond, and to respond positively.

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EDUCATION

PROPOSED NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls—White Bay—Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State.

This morning the Canadian Federation of Students told us that a top priority with them was the establishment of a national advisory council on post-secondary education. This issue is supported by the Canadian university teachers, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the Association of Universities & Colleges and it has widespread support from the business community. Indeed, I would say that a majority of the Ministers of Education in the country support the idea.

I wish to ask the Minister, will he move beyond the spirit of Saskatoon, will he now call together the partners, give us a ray of hope from Saskatoon, and create a national advisory council as the Canadian Federation of Students has requested?