

*Oral Questions***FORESTRY**

PRIVATIZATION OF FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORIES

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my question to the Minister of State (Environment). In light of the uncertainty he has created with regard to the future of the forestry service as a result of recent policy changes, changes which are resulting in a mass exodus of scientists and diligent public servants to other industries and other parts of the world, has the minister received iron-clad assurances from the private sector that his privatization scheme is, in fact, working? If not, is he prepared to defer previous decisions to close down the forests products labs and some of the research stations for the reason of lack of money?

Hon. Len Marchand (Minister of State (Environment)): Mr. Speaker, I will be making an appropriate announcement very soon. I want to assure the hon. member that our plans for privatization are going fairly well. I also want to tell him that he should be more careful in his choice of words, because not one of the research labs is being closed down. We have six research labs across the country. In terms of the privatization of those two forest products labs, the hon. member should not use the words "closing down". As a result of the planning now going on, and looking at privatization, we hope that once we have completed all the negotiations, those two labs will remain intact and, indeed, their position will be enhanced as a result of working with provincial governments, the private sector and the universities. Their service to the forest industry will, therefore, be enhanced.

Mr. Oberle: I am encouraged by the minister's remarks. I interpret him to mean that the research labs will not be closed down even if his privatization plan does not proceed. I interpret his remarks to mean that his decision to phase out—the federal government's decision—by April 1 is being deferred. Can the minister communicate that comfort to the people who are leaving the department as a result of his decision? Can he, also, make reference to the institutions that are being closed in Ottawa, the Forest Management Institute and the Forest Fire Institute?

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, there is no change in moving the Forest Management Research Institute to Petawawa: That is going ahead. The Forest Fire Research Institute's move to Petawawa is going ahead.

I have said on previous occasions in this House that we feel, as a result of the amalgamation of the Forest Fire Research Institute and the Forest Management Research Institute in Petawawa, that that facility will become one of the foremost research institutions for forestry in the country. I should also tell the hon. member that we think very highly of the Canadian Forestry Service. It has done an excellent job. I ask the hon. member to just wait for a little while until he hears the announcements we will be making.

[Mr. Chrétien.]

[Translation]

DAIRYING

COMMITMENT RESPECTING INDEXATION FORMULA

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture.

As the Federation of Dairy Producers of Canada expressed considerable concern last November, I believe, about the fact that the minister has not implemented his promise with regard to indexing—the consequences of which he is fully aware and should not be ignored—can he tell us today when he will act upon that promise that is of interest to the dairy producers?

[English]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member should be aware of the fact that under this Minister of Agriculture and this government, the dairy farmers of Canada have been treated the fairest they have ever been in the history of dairy production in Canada. That fairness will continue.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. La Salle: I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I think that all hon. members particularly those from Quebec, are aware of the matter I raise. I know that several among them agree that the minister should fulfil a commitment. My question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture.

In consideration of the increase at the production cost level, which was proved last June 30, the minister promised to apply an increase of some 52 per cent. Milk producers are wondering whether next January 1 the minister will fulfil his commitment. Then, again I ask the question of the Minister of Agriculture, in all respect, on behalf of those milk producers.

Does the minister intend to agree to fulfil a commitment he took himself and signed with milk producers already ten months ago?

[English]

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I thought I intimated to my good friend, who has voiced the opinion of dairy farmers with regard to their feelings toward the Minister of Agriculture, that we have acted with fairness and will continue to act with fairness.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ISSUE OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS TO FORMER FLQ MEMBERS

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The Canadian ambassador, Gerard Pelletier, says that the embassy in Paris has received instructions to issue travel