

Oral Questions

refugees commended Canada for its role in the refugee program. As you know, we announced the policy respecting the 50 small boat refugees and have increased that by another 20 families which we are taking by month for those going overland.

The present situation, as explained to us, is that the United Nations commissioner is, in fact, endeavouring to board that particular ship to find out what can be done. Normally, we wait for the approach to be made by the United Nations high commissioner. In light of the history and the excellent record Canada has in this regard, I would expect that we will probably be one of the first countries he would contact. We are looking at that issue now.

Mr. Epp: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the minister whether he has been contacted by the church officials of Canada, of various denominations, who have been in contact with my office stating they would be willing to sponsor some of these refugees. Has the minister had these contacts; and, if so, what has been his response to these church officials?

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, it is pretty difficult to make a response to the church officials until we know precisely the magnitude of the problem as discovered by the United Nations high commissioner for refugees. Once we have a contact from that particular office, we will be in a better position to respond. I do compliment the church officials for being quick off the mark on this one.

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FORESTRY

DECISION NOT TO CLOSE PETAWAWA RESEARCH STATION

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of State (Environment): it concerns the proposed amalgamation of the work of two of the forestry labs in Ottawa with the work in Petawawa.

Is the minister prepared to let the House know what study or what group recommended, first of all, the elimination of the establishment at Petawawa and, secondly, the basis for the reversal of that decision followed by the decision to integrate the work of Petawawa with the work of the two forestry institutes from Ottawa?

Hon. Len Marchand (Minister of State (Environment)): Mr. Speaker, these were internal decisions taken with my departmental officials.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, I assume the minister is saying that the decisions were taken by the people of Petawawa and the institute itself, but that is not the story I am getting. Will the minister indicate whether any consideration at all was given to cutting the administrative costs between the operating end of the forestry service and the home base in Ottawa as a means of implementing the restraint program?

[Mr. Cullen.]

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, the amalgamation of the Forest Fire Research Institute and the Forest Management Institute at Petawawa will result in considerable reduction in administrative costs.

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AGRICULTURE

STABILIZATION PLAN RESPECTING WHITE BEANS

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and it relates to the stabilization plan in respect of white beans.

It seems that producers who have worked hard to harvest their beans and sell them, but who had them graded as feed beans—and I said “feed”, not “seed”—are now not eligible for stabilization. I am also advised that some producers received payment and are now being asked to send the cheques back. Will the minister advise us whether this is, in fact, the case and the way the plan was supposed to work? If that is so, will the minister have the plan changed, because these are the very producers who are most in need of this stabilization assistance?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of what the hon. member says about the stabilization board action regarding white beans. I will certainly look into it and report to the hon. member.

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, I had a question for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. Since it took only six days to create the earth, and this is the seventh day I have been trying to get recognition, I shall rest, particularly as the question was asked by a member from Winnipeg.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POLICY RESPECTING CANFARM

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. I would like to return to the subject of Canfarm in Guelph, Ontario. The decision of Canfarm's future was scheduled for announcement last Friday. In view of the fact that each day that goes by without a decision being made makes it that much more difficult for Canfarm to keep dedicated and qualified employees and to sign up new clients for the year 1979, may I ask the minister whether he can give the House a date when a decision will, in fact, be announced on Canfarm's future?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the people in Canfarm know what we are doing and how concerned we are. The people who use Canfarm in Canada know the very same thing. As I said earlier during the question period, we are doing everything we possibly can to make sure it stays alive. There may be some cutbacks in Canfarm, even with the submission made by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, but I am not in a position to say at this time. All