

*Adjournment Debate*

this consultation process. That is a very positive step and I am glad that with the intervention of many people, the Assembly of First Nations will be able to participate in this process and be given due credence by the Government.

However, I believe my questions are still outstanding, the first of which deals with the DRIE funding and whether there will be the co-ordinated delivery agency. There are economic development agreements in the Yukon and Northwest Territories which are being renegotiated at this time. They have been of great assistance to the territories. In March, 1989, those programs will require renewal or revision.

I believe we have seen with the tourism subagreement and the various programs under the economic development agreement some real economic development possibilities in tourism and particularly small business which has been very favourable in my constituency.

It is no secret that aboriginal communities suffer from a high rate of unemployment. Therefore, programs such as the special ARDA and the Native Economic Development Program are especially important to ensure not just short term, band-aid programs but long term fundamental economic development programs that will create some economic stability in that community and enhance not only the economic life but the social fabric of aboriginal communities.

I am pleased to be able to report, after working with the Minister responsible for several months, that one of our large projects for the Yukon has received, a favourable consideration. I hope this will continue throughout the rest of Canada.

I call on the Ministers to clarify these two issues so that northerners and aboriginal people can go ahead with strong economic development.

**Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member refers to the Government's position with respect to ongoing DRIE programs. She will be aware that the consultative process is taking place and it would seem to be somewhat premature for us to attempt to prejudge the outcome of consultations before they are completed.

It is an important initiative about which the Government is very concerned. Indeed, it is an issue with which all Members of the House should take interest and indeed support.

As the Hon Member mentioned, many of these programs expire at the end of March, 1989. Therefore, we do have some time. The federal Government is most anxious to continue the support of these activities and to encourage even more native activity in these fields.

It is essential, however, to have the considered opinions of those groups involved so that they may be analysed and evaluated before we take decisions. The opinions of the aboriginal peoples in these areas are most important to the Government and, I am sure, all Members of the House.

Let me emphasize again that these consultations are taking place in a very open, frank and, above all, honest manner. The suggestion that AFN did not participate because it believed or had information that the Government had already taken decisions about the form or the nature of the ongoing programs is quite incorrect. No such decisions had been taken and no such decisions will be taken until the Government has fully evaluated the result of the consultations.

• (1810)

We are all pleased that there is so much interest on the part of native peoples in this government program. The Assembly of First Nations has recently, and very thankfully, agreed to participate fully and has joined with other organizations representing the Métis, the Inuit, the status and the non-status Indian communities that have been involved since the process was launched last summer.

DRIE's native economic programs are well known to the aboriginal communities. They have been utilized to a great advantage in all parts of the country. For example, until the end of January, 1988, five major projects totalling \$6.7 million have been approved for the Yukon under the Native Economic Development Program. Indeed, throughout Canada under the NEDP over 386 projects have been approved, representing a total commitment by the federal Government of some \$183.6 million.

We are delighted by the interest in these programs. We are delighted that the consultation process is ongoing. We are looking forward to the very real and meaningful suggestions of the native peoples as to just how these programs can best be changed to adapt to the future.

AGRICULTURE—SPECIAL CANADIAN GRAINS PROGRAM—  
COVERAGE OF IRRIGATION FARMERS.

**Mr. Bill Gottselig (Moose Jaw):** Madam Speaker, I am very happy tonight to further raise some concerns I had, as I indicated in my question on November 26, 1987, regarding the Special Canadian Grains Program. At that time the concern had been expressed to me by many of my constituents that the irrigation farmers were not receiving recognition for the increased costs in increased yields unless they were in a specified irrigation district.

As a result of representations I made, and as a result of representations by many other Members of Parliament who had constituents in this same position, I am happy to report that the Government has recognized irrigation farmers, if they fall within certain criteria. That is to say that they must pay either a water tax or a water licence each year. Based on that recognition and the additional yields they produce that are recognized by irrigation districts as well as other irrigation associations and, in fact, crop insurance in Saskatchewan which provides additional coverage for irrigation farmers, they would receive additional payouts under the Special Canadian Grains Program.