

The Government of Canada is trying to undo about a decade of inaction in the environment by my hon. friend's Party. Nothing was done, from acid rain to global warming. Your record was a big zero.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture.

Yesterday the parliamentary secretary to the minister reported to the House that the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Grains and Oilseeds and the prairie agriculture ministers met in Winnipeg "to formalize and, hopefully, to finalize an agreement with those provinces".

Everyone attending all these endless meetings for the last six weeks has presumably still been getting their pay cheques and hard-pressed farmers have yet to see a dollar. I would like to ask the minister, was an agreement reached and, if one was, what was it?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the hon. member and members of the House that the meeting was held and it was a very productive meeting. I think it is fair to say that progress was made.

The provinces acknowledged the fact that there would have to be some cost sharing with respect to this particular program. I think there was also an acknowledgement of the unique situation that Saskatchewan finds itself in because of the huge decrease of income in that province. There was certainly acknowledgement made and we are trying to find a way to deal with that. As well, we had a very productive discussion with respect to the safety-net and long-term stabilization program which is something that the government is actively considering.

All these things are being worked on during the course of this week. We will have a further meeting in Toronto where all the ministers of agriculture will be meeting on Friday. Hopefully, we will be able to advance these proposals at that time.

Oral Questions

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same minister. I appreciate the fact that he reports that progress has been made, but we certainly have had reports of progress something like 10 or 11 times.

I would like to remind the minister that up to 45 per cent of the crop is in in some areas; 20 per cent over-all. Much of this crop has gone in with inadequate preparation for fertilizer and other inputs, and acreages are being reduced. This is starting to look like a crop reduction program rather than a seeding assistance program.

When can farmers expect finally to have some money in their hands?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, despite what the hon. member says, I think he will find that statistics will reveal that there is an increase in plantings projected for this year and I think that is a very positive sign.

I recognize the difficulty and the hon. member knows that. That is why the federal government announced its intention to put \$500 million on the table on March 30. We have asked the provinces to come on board, to help us to design the program, to help us deliver the program, and to help us pay for that program because it was in everyone's interest to get as much money into the hands of the farmers as quickly as we possibly could.

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[Translation]

PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: It is with great pleasure that I draw the attention of the House to the presence in our gallery of His Excellency Felipe Gonzalez Marquez, President of the Government of Spain.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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• (1440)

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Housing. Yesterday, my colleague from LaSalle—Émard and I presented