

In view of the falling cattle prices and the fact that some herd owners are actually dispersing their herds, are the Deputy Prime Minister and the Government prepared to make an announcement this week to end this uncertainty in the agricultural field?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the Hon. Member acknowledges the fact that the Government has responded to these kinds of situations in the past. That stands in good stead for the fact that we will be responding on this occasion as well.

The points raised by the Hon. Member are indeed those which will be discussed with provincial counterparts. I am sure that a satisfactory solution will be found as a result of those discussions. Again, I believe the Hon. Member will be pleased with the fact that once again the federal Government has shown leadership in this area and will have responded to this very serious crisis.

Mr. Foster: The Deputy Prime Minister did not answer my question.

REQUEST FOR EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I asked the Deputy Prime Minister if the Government would announce this week a herd stabilization program to end the uncertainty. We know of the dispute that arose last week between the Prime Minister and his officials. Western farmers want to know whether an announcement on this will be postponed until next month or even beyond the economic summit? Surely this matter is urgent enough that a decision and an announcement should be made this week to end the uncertainty in the drought areas?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I hope I can take it from the Hon. Member's question and comments that he is not criticizing the Prime Minister for standing up for farmers, particularly farmers who have been saddled with depressing prices as a result of a trade war going on between the EEC and the United States. I think the cattlemen clearly pointed out that the Prime Minister had a right to condemn the EEC. I hope that he agrees with the position of the Prime Minister in that regard. I see him nodding in the affirmative.

Mr. Foster: That is right. Are you going to announce a program this week?

Mr. Mazankowski: With respect, I did answer the question. I told the Hon. Member that these were the points that were going to be discussed with the provincial Ministers. As I indicated, this will be a joint program. There is a shared responsibility. Surely the provinces have a responsibility. We recognize our responsibility and we think we can address this issue more effectively together than individually. That is the purpose of the meeting.

Oral Questions

IMMIGRATION

STATUS OF WOMEN IMMIGRANTS

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Immigration. This weekend past, the Prime Minister claimed that his Government has done more for women than any previous federal Government. Yet today more than 60 per cent of female immigrants to Canada enter under the family class of immigration, which makes them ineligible for public assistance when they are in need, a situation that violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms since that guarantees to all residents of Canada equal rights to education, employment, and freedom of speech.

When will the Government recognize its responsibilities and assure to these immigrant women the same rights and privileges as other Canadian men and women have?

[Translation]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration)): Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that as a Member of this Government and as a woman, I am very proud of what we have done and I support what our Prime Minister said yesterday.

We have indeed taken care of the economic, social and cultural situation of women. We have made great progress in immigration. Not everything has been done, because there was a lot to do. We are working on the corrections that still have to be made and I must pay him tribute for everything that has been done.

ACCESS TO LANGUAGE PROGRAMS BY WOMEN IMMIGRANTS— MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question.

Immigrant women who do not wish to work outside the home upon their arrival do not have access to the language program for immigrant women. This contributes to the isolation of these women and prevents them from obtaining employment in the future.

Can the Government tell us when it will give free access to the language program for all immigrant women, whatever their status?

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of State (Employment and Immigration)): Mr. Speaker, I must remind you that many women already benefit from integration and language learning programs. We also have several pilot programs in place. And as I said earlier, we definitely intend to leave plenty of room for creativity and to find what must be done as our society evolves.