

Oral Questions

up for the farmers, as we have done for the last four years. That was never done before for the farmers.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL WELFARE**TREATMENT OF STUDENT LOANS AS REVENUE—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Does the Minister know that, since August 11, the New Brunswick Government considers that student loans are an income? This is why the New Brunswick Government has reduced social welfare payments to men and women attending university because this is required under regulations concerning the Canada Assistance Plan. Does the Minister agree with that?

[English]

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should be aware that under the Canada Assistance Plan the federal Government pays 50 per cent on an expended cost basis for costs eligible under the Canada Assistance Plan. The rates are subject to provincial determination.

I wish to remind the Hon. Member that when changes were made here to the Canada Pension Plan, and particularly the disability provisions of that plan, this Government put it on the record very clearly that it wanted to see a pass-through for those types of increases that came through here in a legislative form and that the disabled, for example, would have those benefits.

I would suggest to the Hon. Member that the principle, just as we applied it to Bill C-116 from a federal point of view, is that if a province increases those rates the federal Government will pay its share of the 50 per cent under the CAP.

FEDERAL POLICY

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, I think there has been a misapprehension on the part of the Minister. The question has to do with the fact that mothers and single parents wishing to go to university and who have Canada Student Loans are having those student loans counted as income for the purpose of eligibility for welfare assistance, and welfare assistance payments are being cut.

Does the Government approve of a situation where the very people we would like to see get off welfare are being denied, by the action of the provincial Government, an opportunity to do so by attending university through the help of Canada Student Loans?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): No, Mr. Speaker, I was not labouring under any misconception. The point I wanted to make to the Member was exactly the position that we held with respect to pass-through. I am saying to the Hon. Member that it is for the province to determine what is used for the purposes of calculation of social benefits.

I also suggest to the Hon. Member that what he should keep in mind is that it was this Government and this Minister, after 13 years of discussion prior to the Government coming into office, that wanted to have a change in the Canada Assistance Plan relating both to payments that were made to people who were eligible for upgrading, for example, under UIC, and under CIC, as well as social benefits that they were receiving, and that if they got partial or part-time work as they improved themselves they would not immediately lose dollar for dollar assistance through welfare.

That principle has been one that has guided us for four years. If the provinces want to make changes as to the rates, obviously we will pay our 50 per cent.

Mr. Speaker: This will be the last question in Question Period.

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PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS**ONTARIO—TEMAGAMI LAND CLAIM**

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. As the Minister is no doubt aware, recently there has been a lot of concern in northern Ontario over the progress of the settlement of the Temagami land claim, especially among the local residents whose jobs, future, and livelihood are wrapped up in the Temagami wilderness controversy.

Could the Minister inform the House whether the federal Government has played any part in the settlement process? Could the Minister also indicate whether the federal Government has been informed by provincial counterparts as to progress on settlement of this claim?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Minister of Western Diversification): Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the Hon. Member is aware, for over 100 years the Temagami Band has been attempting to make a treaty with the Government of Ontario.

The Government of Canada is not directly involved in the band's claim. We have been supportive of the band's appeal to the Supreme Court of Ontario by providing \$400,000 in costs for the band to make the appeal, but the Government of Canada is not directly involved.