

do not understand the sensitivity of Manitobans about how they have been treated by the Government on the CF-18 decision and a host of other matters.

Perhaps the Minister in charge of Manitoba, the Member for Provencher, can state why Manitoba had to be treated to this spectacle of hearing over the news that the Prime Minister was responding with respect to an aluminum smelter in Quebec, when the Government and people of Manitoba have yet to have their request in that respect even acknowledged?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member asks a valid question that deserves an answer. I believe that in Quebec there is a concrete proposal that has been discussed by companies, which has been put forward, and which received support in the initial form. In Manitoba there is not a proposal. There are two companies in Manitoba that are presently discussing with the Government of Manitoba the opportunities that can be provided there. The Government of Canada is familiar with that, and when something concrete comes forward the Government of Canada will react.

Mr. Blaikie: It is ironic that the Conservative Government is always talking against the notion of a planned economy but it seems it has nothing against an economy that is planned according to the election agenda of the Government.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to whomever is responding for the Government next on this issue. What is the Government's plan with respect to aluminum smelter development in Canada? When will the people and the Government of Manitoba know what is the policy, or is there only a policy that relates to the electoral agenda of the Prime Minister as he sees fit from weekend to weekend?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member should know, back in 1982-83 there was a proposal for an aluminum smelter in Manitoba when the NDP Government happened to be in power at that time. There was a concrete proposal at that time in 1982-83, and nothing came forward in Manitoba on an aluminum smelter in 1982-83.

Mr. Axworthy: The offer was made.

Mr. McKnight: There was not an offer made.

Mr. Axworthy: Yes there was.

Mr. McKnight: It was rejected if there had been one, because it did not take place. There is not an aluminum smelter in Manitoba.

Oral Questions

There are two companies discussing opportunities with the Government of Manitoba. When those opportunities are further developed, the Government will explore them with the Province of Manitoba, as we would with any other Government.

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● (1450)

HEALTH

PESTICIDE ALLEGEDLY USED BY CALIFORNIA GRAPE GROWERS

Mr. John Ostrom (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The United Farm Workers of America have accused California grape producers of using a pesticide which may cause cancer and birth defects. A nerve gas type agent is being used which has not undergone any testing at all with regard to long-term health effects.

Will the Minister investigate these allegations? If indeed the grapes have been sprayed with this pesticide which may affect an individual's health, will he ban the importation of grapes from California?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Health and Welfare and the Department of Agriculture, as the Hon. Member will know, conduct regular examinations and tests of fruit imports, in this case California grapes, for pesticide residue on those grapes.

It is interesting to note that members of the California Department of Food and Agriculture have also spoken on this issue claiming that the grapes are safe. The CLC has stated that one of the pesticides, dinoseb, is a residue on the grapes. Dinoseb has not been used since 1986, but it still claims that they were using it. Perhaps it is an old briefing note that it had.

From National Health and Welfare's point of view, our officials are continuing to test. Obviously, if there is any pesticide residue, those grapes would not be allowed in under regulations that are in place.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

PERIOD REQUIRED TO QUALIFY FOR BENEFITS— DISADVANTAGED REGIONS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State (Employment and Immigration). The people in southern New