

Oral Questions

desperate drought situation in many districts and counties of Ontario and in some areas of Québec.

After the federal-provincial Ministers' meeting two days ago, the Minister announced that the same assistance would be provided in Ontario and Québec as has been provided in the West. So far the only program is the livestock program in the West.

Will the same \$60 per head of breeding cow be provided in the Ontario counties and districts affected? Will the same \$15 per acre of assistance in tax deferral be provided for Ontario counties and districts affected? When will application forms be available? Will the funds be provided on the same date as they are being provided in western Canada, which I assume is using the starting date of July 1 with payments being made sometime in late August? Could the Minister clarify those issues?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity for further clarification, although the message coming out of the federal-provincial meeting was very clear.

At the federal-provincial meeting in Toronto on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday I said that the same process that we followed in western Canada would be followed in eastern Canada. As of last Tuesday we had already formed the federal-provincial drought co-ordinating committee in the East. One meeting had already been held.

What I said then, and what I am saying here today, is that the same process will be followed in the eastern part of the country that was followed in western Canada.

CORN PRODUCERS—CROP INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is the following. I hope that the Minister will be able to provide exactly the same assistance in eastern Canada as is being provided in the West. That is what farmers want to know. They are not so much concerned about the process as they are that the funds will be provided on the same basis.

I also want to deal with the question of the losses in wheat, soybeans, corn, and a number of horticultural crops. Those losses are estimated to be well over half a million dollars already. By the end of the month the losses could approach 80 to 90 per cent in corn alone.

Is the Minister prepared to accept the recommendation of the Ontario corn producers that the yield factor be raised from 80 per cent to 90 per cent, and that the pricing factor be raised to the current day pricing?

In co-operation with provincial Ministers is the Minister willing to extend the application date for crop insurance until September 1, provided that the producers enrol for a two or three-year period? Will that type of assistance that has been proposed by the Ontario corn producers cover other crops? Is the Minister willing to accept those recommendations, many of

which were contained in the federal-provincial review committee and were reported over a year ago? So far no legislation has been brought forward or policies adopted to implement those recommendations in the 1987 federal-provincial crop insurance review committee report.

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I do not think it would be appropriate for anyone who is paying the bill to accept any recommendations at this time. Any recommendations at this time are sheer speculation, and they will be speculation until later in the year when we are closer to harvest time, or at the normal harvest time, depending on the specific crop.

We will work jointly with the provinces and with the producer organizations to come up with recommendations to deal with the situation, exactly the course of action that we followed in western Canada.

We are interested in fairness and equity. We are interested in enhancing the crop insurance program. We are interested in encouraging a greater participation and a greater enrolment in the crop insurance program. But we are also interested in ensuring that there is fairness and equity in financing.

We are proposing to the provinces that we have a more equitable way of financing, more on a tri-partite approach. If the provinces would follow this, this would mean that there would be fairness and equity in crop insurance. It would also mean that Canadian farmers would pay somewhat less. That concept already exists in the Province of Québec and in the Province of Newfoundland. If we get on with the job, if the provinces are prepared to pay their fair share, then we can make an awful lot of progress in the next week to ten days.

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● (1150)

PUBLIC SERVICE

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY—SCIENTIFIC AND PROFESSIONAL CATEGORY

Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. The Minister knows that despite the Government's employment equity program to increase employment of women in the federal Public Service, 232 scientific and professional jobs held by female public servants will be gone by 1991. Representing only 25 per cent of this group, women will lose 30 per cent of the jobs.

Will the Minister not admit that it is sheer hypocrisy to talk about increasing employment of women in the federal Public Service while making such disproportionate cuts in this very, very important category?

Hon. Pat Carney (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed that the Hon. Member has