

some interest to the Hon. Member to know that this very day Deputy Ministers are meeting here in Ottawa and I would hope that when the meetings are concluded we will have a number of signatures on the agreement. However, there is no question about the fact that we have been prepared to sign, for quite some time.

REQUEST FOR RETROACTIVITY

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister indicate whether he is willing to make the program retroactive to the first of the year as requested by Alberta and Ontario?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should know that the Act allows for this program to be retroactive to January 1, 1985. However, we are one of 10 or 11 parties involved. I am not going to dictate the terms concerning retroactivity. That was one of the problems in the past where certain parties tried to dictate. That is not our task. Our task is to co-operate and consult with our partners equally, and I am sure we can come to some agreement which is acceptable to as many parties that join the plan.

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FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS DEPOSITORS COMPENSATION ACT

REQUEST THAT UNINSURED DEPOSITORS BE CALLED AS COMMITTEE WITNESSES

Mr. Bill Attewell (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Chairman of the Legislative Committee concerned with Bill C-79. Since this Bill deals with uninsured depositors, many of whom are charitable and church organizations as well as municipalities, and since many people have questioned their motives, will the Chairman be inviting uninsured depositors as witnesses so they can tell the Committee why they supported the CCB and Northland Banks?

Mr. Blenkarn: That is in order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think it is in order to ask questions of a committee chairman concerning decisions on matters which the committee has discussed.

Mr. Blenkarn: Which this is.

Mr. Speaker: I might have been willing to allow the question, but that may change my mind.

I think, given the context, I am going to allow the question.

Mr. Scott Fennell (Ontario): Mr. Speaker, the all-Party steering group of the committee had a meeting this morning and the Chairman was requested to obtain written submissions from Canadians directly affected by the current affairs of the CCB and Northland Banks. Indeed, we hope that some group will come forward to express their concerns and explain why they continued to have faith in the regional banks.

Oral Questions

LABOUR CONDITIONS

POTENTIAL LOSS OF JOBS IN SUDBURY AREA

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. At present the Sudbury area is faced with the potential loss of 1,500 jobs at Inco and Falconbridge. This will further exacerbate an unemployment rate which is presently the third highest in Canada. Can the Minister tell this House what she intends to do about this situation?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member will know, I indicated initially that I was not satisfied with the original benefits package originally put forward by Inco, and since that time Inco has come back and enriched its benefits package by some 70 per cent. I see that it has extended the date for acceptance of that benefits package to the middle of November, and I am hopeful that there will be sufficient take-up of that benefits package through early retirement, and that it will not be necessary to effect further lay-offs. I am hoping that is what we will see in the Sudbury area.

• (1450)

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, at the danger of repeating my question, which I wouldn't want to do—

Mr. Crosbie: Good man.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has answered a question that I did not ask.

Mr. Crosbie: Well, don't ask it again.

Mr. Rodriguez: We are going to lose 1,500 jobs in the Sudbury basin. Can the Minister tell the House specifically whether there is anything that the Minister is thinking about which can be done for those workers and that community?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Hon. Member that I have already met with the Ontario Minister of Labour in order that we can jointly explore new ideas for fostering employment opportunities in the Sudbury basin. And as that initiative is developed I would invite the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt and, indeed, the Hon. Member for Sudbury, to join us in those efforts.