

S. O. 21

AGRICULTURE

SITUATION OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND POTATO FARMERS

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of Members of the House, and particularly to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise), the urgent need of Prince Edward Island potato farmers for financial assistance.

Due to the drought last summer, most potatoes did not reach full size. These potatoes are in storage and there is no market for them. I wish to point out that my riding, the western part of Prince Edward Island, was especially hard hit, and potato producers in this area have suffered the greatest losses.

This is a crisis situation. How discouraging it is for these farmers to plant their 1988 crop when they still have not received one penny for their 1987 crop. These farmers are in dire financial straits.

The P.E.I. Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Tim Carroll, has written to the Minister on behalf of potato producers adversely affected, most of whom reside in the western part of Prince Edward Island. He wrote to request financial assistance under those federal programs designed to aid farmers who suffer losses specifically from drought. I urge the Minister to act on this request immediately and provide this much needed financial assistance to the P.E.I. potato industry.

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FAMILY VIOLENCE

GOVERNMENT PROGRAM WELCOMED

Mr. William G. Lesick (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the sad effects that family violence can have on the peace and stability of the family, and especially so when children are involved. The announcement by the Minister of Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) of a four-year \$40 million program to address this tragic and complex problem is welcomed by all Canadians and with much satisfaction by those professionals and volunteers who work with the victims and the individuals who inflict the damage.

Family violence is indeed a serious, although somewhat hidden problem in Canada. The challenge now facing the CMHC, the Departments of Health and Welfare, Justice, the Solicitor General, Indian and Northern Affairs, and the Secretary of State is a formidable one and will demand the very best effort and resources.

I know I speak for all Canadians in wishing them success, because family violence must stop.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

DENIALS OF ACCESS REQUESTS

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, during the 1984 election campaign the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) told Canadians that "secrecy and stonewalling have become a habit with the Government and we will never break the habit until we change the Government".

Well, it is clear that for this Prime Minister a vice in opposition becomes a virtue in government.

Stonewalling and secrecy are apt adjectives to describe the Tories' attitude toward sharing information with Canadians.

I say this because I have filed many access to information requests seeking information concerning the nature of Canada's involvement in chemical and biological warfare research as well as a former Conservative Defence Minister's effort to pull Canada out of NATO. I was denied access to either of these pieces of information.

In the case of the NATO request the current Defence Minister (Mr. Beatty) invoked a rarely used section of the Access to Information Act which permits him not even to acknowledge the existence of the material requested. He refused even to acknowledge the existence of the material.

That, Mr. Speaker, should give us all pause. The Tories' obsession with secrecy is a habit that, to quote the Prime Minister, "we will never break until we change the Government". This is firm proof of the need for a New Democratic Party Government.

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FAMILY VIOLENCE

FEDERAL INITIATIVE WELCOMED

Mrs. Mary Collins (Capilano): Mr. Speaker, we were certainly pleased earlier this week when the federal Government announced a \$40 million initiative to address the problem of family violence. In addition to the \$22 million allocated to acquisition or construction of additional emergency housing for abused women and their children, the remainder of the funds will be used for programs of prevention, education, and support for those who are victims of family violence. These may include spouses, children, youth or, sadly, the emergence of a new social problem, abuse of the elderly.

This problem cuts across social, economic, and cultural boundaries and touches on responsibilities of individuals, communities, government and non-government organizations.

Seven federal Departments will be involved in this welcome federal initiative, but there must be support from all of us if we as a society are to be effective in dealing with this shocking problem, to break the cycle of abuse in order that future