

Oral Questions

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I will discuss it. In fact at the last meeting of Ministers Social Welfare the question was discussed. At that time it was agreed between the provinces and the federal Government that we would be twinning the cost of social assistance where people wanted to take training or were able to take some part-time work and they were afraid, for instance, to lose dental benefits or pharmacare benefits for their children, especially single women. It was twinned, and a number of people have taken advantage of those kinds of opportunities. I think we are getting people from welfare into greater independence. This is a constant issue before us.

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LOTTERIES**TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVINCES**

Mr. Joe Reid (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice, and arises out of the recent Criminal Code amendments transferring the sports pool lottery games to the provinces. Coming from a vulnerable community on the frontier, may I ask the Minister can those amendments be interpreted as paving the way for provinces to get into slot machine and Las Vegas type gambling operations as some of the provinces now interpret that legislation?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the legislation in question was passed with the co-operation of all Members of this House, I am glad to be able to report, and with the support of all the provinces. I think that the legislation that was passed does not extend the law very extensively in this direction. It may help to clarify it. The situation is, of course, that even before these amendments were passed the provinces could, if they decided to do so, permit Governments or licensed charitable organizations to conduct casinos. Slot machines have been operated by Governments in Manitoba and Alberta without complaint.

To sum up, Mr. Speaker, the matter is now in the hands of the provinces. They can allow gambling such as permitted by the Bill if they wish, or forbid it. It is in their hands. It was part of an arrangement entered into with them and all Members of this House supported the legislation. I do not think there is any chance of Las Vegas style private gambling in this country.

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AGRICULTURE**SUGAR-BEET INDUSTRY—REQUEST FOR NATIONAL POLICY**

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. As the Minister well knows, the sugar-beet industry of western Canada is in danger of dying unless immediate action is taken. This will influence thousands of jobs and the livelihood of

many hundreds of communities in the west. Can he assure the House this afternoon that the Government will bring down a national sugar policy this week so the farmers can properly go about preparing for the planting of next year's crop?

● (1500)

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the interest of the former Minister in this very important subject. However, I am sure the former Minister will recognize that this Government need not take a back seat to any Government in the measures it has taken on behalf of the agricultural industry.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wise: He will know that we have passed more agriculture legislation in eight months than the previous Government did in eight years.

We have also taken over 107 initiatives which transferred well over \$2 billion from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to the agricultural industry. That indeed is a record.

REQUEST FOR EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, that brief and enlightening history was fascinating but it is of absolutely no help to the sugar-beet growers of western Canada. The Minister knows how crucial it is that those thousands of producers have an answer immediately so that they can prepare for next year's crop. Will a national sugar policy be announced this week?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Hon. Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board, has provided the leadership in this particular issue. As everyone will know, he has consulted with each and every sector of the industry. However, to this point in time the Government has not yet made a decision.

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ATOMIC ENERGY OF CANADA LIMITED**RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL RESEARCH**

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The Minister will be aware of a concern expressed by the Manitoba Government and others about the list of potential American radioactive dump sites released recently, and she will also be aware of an impending agreement between AECL and the U.S. Department of Energy for further co-operation at the Lac du Bonnet underground research laboratory. Given this concern, will the Minister, who is responsible for AECL, instruct AECL not to enter into any agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy with respect to research on radioactive waste disposal until such time as those sites which could potentially affect Canada are removed from the American list?