

dry in history. Earlier this week the Minister indicated he was going to take funds from the long-term conservation and degradation soil program to deal with emergency water supplies for wells, dug-outs, pipelines and so forth.

Can the Minister indicate whether he is willing to provide the full \$75 million if that is necessary this year, and can he also explain why he is not bringing in new money rather than taking funds from a long-term three-year program, I understand, for soil conservation and degradation?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Hon. Member is assuming a little too much. As usual, he is getting a bit ahead of himself. He said the other day that funding for soil and water conservation had been slashed. That is false and misleading. In fact it has not been reduced or slashed but has increased from about \$42 million in 1983-84 to \$55.6 million in 1989. If we take into consideration other activities during that same period of time we have an increase from \$44.7 million to some \$64 million. That is not a decrease, it is an increase in that general area.

I said in response to the Hon. Member on Monday that we are working hand-in-hand with provincial Governments and providing assistance in the form of technical and engineering advice, making available equipment we have in western Canada through PFRA, and providing assistance with respect to moving water to locations where there is none. We will continue to work over the next 10 days in the same manner.

#### REQUEST FOR HELP IN MOVING LIVESTOCK FROM AFFECTED AREA

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, I will debate the Estimates with the Minister in the Standing Committee on Agriculture, but he knows one of the most urgent matters is the fact there is not adequate water for herds of cattle. There is no feed in many areas. Is the Government prepared to provide funding for moving livestock herds out of the drought area or bringing supplies of feed into the area? As he knows, many community pastures are not accepting cattle herds because there is no feed or grass for them.

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, common sense dictates that, if the situation continues, those would be options. We are receiving the advice and information on a day-to-day basis, and these are, at this point in time at least, options. Again, I hope Mother Nature looks favourably upon us and these options do not become reality. However, common sense would dictate, and because of the priority this Government places on agriculture, that if those options become reality, then naturally we will, as in the past, be quite prepared to do what we have to do to assist in any way possible.

### Oral Questions

#### FINANCE

##### NORTHERN TAX BENEFITS—SITUATION IN NELSON, B.C.

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance regarding tax fairness. The question involves those areas designated as eligible for northern benefits. The Minister is likely aware of the situation in Nelson, British Columbia, where a suburb was designated to receive northern benefits but not the city itself.

Will the Minister explain the fairness of this approach where someone on one side of a road is eligible but on the other side is not?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, that is precisely the reason we appointed a commission under the chairmanship of René Brunelle to review and study the conditions which have led to this kind of inequity. We recognize there is a problem, but it must be dealt with in a global way. We cannot just deal with one community or another, or a group of communities; we have to review the whole matter on a nation-wide basis. That is the mandate of the commission and we hope they will be able to report quickly. However, we recognize it is a complex issue which we have asked them to deal with.

##### DESIGNATION OF SUBURB AS QUALIFYING AREA

**Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap):** Mr. Speaker, could the Minister explain, since the community of Nelson is only a 25-minute drive from the U.S. border, how the situation developed? It was his Government which approved this designation in the first place, and why would it approve a suburb receiving northern benefits but not the city itself?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is incorrect in what he just said. The designations for these isolated communities have been built up over the years by Treasury Board, going back well before we took office. We adopted the designations they had in place and have since found there have been difficulties, to which he alluded. That is what we are trying to deal with through the commission.

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#### AIR CANADA

##### ACQUISITION OF NEW AIRCRAFT—INDUSTRIAL BENEFITS

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport and concerns the much discussed plans of Air Canada to make a substantial procurement of aircraft, in the order of \$1.5 billion according to reports. We know that Airbus, with the assistance of Frank Moores, and McDonnell Douglas and Boeing are all bidding for this major purchase. Has the Government made any effort to ensure that this big order by Air Canada will result in