

other countries who have been invited to Expo by Bill Bennett but the Canadian Government will not give them a visitor's visa to get into Canada?

Hon. Walter McLean (Minister of State (Immigration) and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Hon. Member that the Government is aware of the importance of visitors to Expo 86. We are also aware that where there are visitor visa provisions in place, the officers dealing with these cases should be particularly sensitive to the circumstances of Expo 86. I have in fact received representations from a number of Vancouver area Members as recently as yesterday on this matter, and have sent out a telex advising those officers granting visitor visas to be sensitive to the tourist implications, while honouring, obviously, the security needs of the country.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

PROBLEMS OF QUEBEC POTATO PRODUCERS

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture, to inform him of the serious financial problems facing potato producers in Quebec.

I would like to ask someone on the Government side to explain why potato producers in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are to receive federal financial assistance totalling \$9.8 million, when Quebec potato producers are in great financial difficulty and have received no assistance and no announcement from the federal Government.

[English]

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of State (Forestry)): Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the potato producers of eastern Canada were very pleased with the type of assistance we were able to provide. As to the observation about the problems in Quebec, I would be pleased to present that particular position to the Minister who is absent on government duty.

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Minister realizes there is a difficult situation in Quebec, but it seems to me the Government could do more.

Why is it helping only two of the potato producing provinces—not that I disapprove of helping Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick,—but only has words of sympathy for Quebec producers? We would like immediate assistance.

Oral Questions

• (1150)

[English]

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of State (Forestry)): Mr. Speaker, the importance of the potato producers in those two provinces of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick is very significant. They had very real problems in putting in this year's crop. However, I will take the Hon. Member's representations to the Minister.

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[Translation]

FORESTRY

INQUIRY IF NEW DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRED FOLLOWING CANADA-QUEBEC AGREEMENT ON GENETICS OF SMALL PLANTS SOUGHT BY QUEBEC

Mr. Gabriel Fontaine (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State (Forestry). On April 30, 1985, our Government signed the Canada-Quebec Agreement on Forestry. Quebec wanted 300 million small plants per year under this Agreement.

Have there been any significant developments in the genetics of small plants, in co-operation with the Quebec private sector, since the Agreement was signed?

[English]

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of State (Forestry)): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Hon. Member that our own Laurentian Research Centre has been working with the Quebec Department of Energy and Resources to develop the new kinds of strains in species that will grow faster and be more productive. I believe that the first run of seeds from that particular strain will be available this year.

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FORESTRY

REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATE DEPARTMENT

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question also is directed to the Minister of State for Forestry. It must be his day today. Is he aware that his colleague, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Environment and Forestry, has called for the creation of a complete Department of Forestry which would be a line Department? Will he tell us when this will come about?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Hon. Member knows quite well that that is the kind of change that falls within the exclusive prerogative of the Prime Minister. If and