

Oral Questions

producers who are producing for the domestic market as well as those producing for the international market.

I am sure the hon. member realizes that even in his own province interest rates are subsidized by the Alberta government through some loan programs which offer a fixed rate of interest of 9 per cent. For instance, we have nothing like that for the producers in the province of Ontario, and that creates inequity also. I hope the hon. member has made that kind of representation to his provincial minister of agriculture in Alberta. Some provinces have greater resources to do these kinds of things than other provinces. I am sure the hon. member realizes that his province probably has the greatest resources, but his minister does not believe in that form of top loading that he talks about.

● (1440)

We have a deputy ministers' meeting being held first, I believe next week or the following week, to discuss some of these very things. Under no stabilization program in which I am involved will there be payments to those producers who are already being fully subsidized in some form or another by their own provincial governments.

Mr. Schellenberger: Madam Speaker, I believe, then, that the minister is not prepared to call together the ministers of agriculture from all the provinces. Would he, then, make an interim stabilization payment under the stabilization plan in order to help livestock producers who are in trouble; or would he discuss with the provinces which are top loading, the elimination of feed freight assistance so that there might be some justice in this area?

Mr. Whelan: Madam Speaker, the province which gets the most feed freight assistance is British Columbia. The next is one of the maritime provinces. I am not suggesting the hon. member is insinuating that we should disband the feed freight assistance in those provinces, but feed freight assistance is being phased out in practically all of Ontario and all of western Quebec.

However, when the hon. member says I have not suggested to the provincial ministers that we would meet, and should meet, that is not so, because the deputy ministers will be meeting first. If they come to the conclusion that we can forge ahead with some program, we will be calling a meeting immediately after that. But I am sure that the hon. member is aware, for instance, that the minister from Alberta is in favour of an orderly federal marketing system.

The minister of agriculture for Saskatchewan wants me to impose a national marketing system on hog and beef producers. I do not know if the hon. member is suggesting that. The minister of agriculture of Manitoba is suggesting that he should give Ottawa all of his stabilization programs and we should absorb them federally. That kind of suggestion is what we are getting and we are trying to put them together to make a federal program that is workable. They recognize that their provincial programs are just not workable for a federal production entity called agriculture.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

NATIVE HEALTH CARE—IMPLEMENTATION OF
RECOMMENDATIONS IN BERGER REPORT—STRUCTURE OF
INDIAN BANDS' GOVERNMENT

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. For several weeks now the minister has had Mr. Justice Berger's report on Indian and Inuit health consultation.

Considering the report's findings on the deplorable state of Indian health and the need for greater Indian control over their health care delivery system, can the minister inform the House whether she will be implementing the four recommendations of the report, and what timetable we can expect?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, I met with the National Indian Brotherhood at the beginning of April. I am sorry, but I do not remember the exact date. The hon. member seems to have learned about the Berger report only today. I informed the National Indian Brotherhood at that time that I agree in principle with all the recommendations, and we have started a follow-up process and, of course, a consultation process to implement each of the recommendations; in particular, the one which would lead to a national conference on Indian health, with the Indian community in July of this year.

Mr. Manly: Madam Speaker, this morning, at the first nations constitutional conference, the minister heard complaints from Indian people that members of the medical service branch in her department lack understanding of the role of band councils and of other aspects of Indian life.

Would the minister undertake to provide a program to acquaint her staff with the cultural, social and economic background of the Indian people and of the varied structures of Indian government?

Mrs. Bégin: Madam Speaker, the fact is that one participant this morning mentioned to me that the concept of band councils might not be judged at its proper value by some of my staff in some parts of Canada.

The hon. member may not be aware that within the medical services branch there are meetings of all the staff from all over Canada at different times of the year. The last such meeting was in Cornwall. I attended part of it, again earlier in April. The idea, of course, is always to better the understanding and to bridge the communities as best we can, and that starts with a knowledge of the organizational structures of the Indian communities.

* * *

LABOUR CONDITIONS

HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES TO PROTECT URANIUM
MINERS

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour. In view of the very great concern expressed by uranium miners working under federal