

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): I take the question very seriously and will see that my honourable friend's comments are conveyed to the appropriate quarters.

AGRICULTURE

SUGAR-BEET INDUSTRY—1983 STABILIZATION PAYMENT— GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Joyce Fairbairn: Honourable senators, I wonder if I could ask the Leader of the Government in the Senate once again whether he has anything to report on the progress of the sugar-beet deliberations. We are getting to the time when farmers will be under extreme pressure to place orders so that they can grow a crop this year. I wonder whether some kind of answer can be given to them fairly quickly. All the deadlines are fast approaching.

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): I think the answer to the question is, yes, some answer can be given quite quickly, but I cannot give it today.

Hon. H. A. Olson: Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question. Essentially, that is the same reply we have been receiving for the past several weeks. We have heard that it will be soon, and as we move along, I guess it will be sooner, and so forth.

I should like the Leader of the Government to know that it may be that wholesale houses and other farm and agricultural product suppliers have put in the necessary chemicals—that is, herbicides, and so forth—that are specifically required for growing a sugar-beet crop, but that is not being done in Alberta because there is no agreement between the sugar-beet producers and the processors to grow a crop. The service and supply companies are not prepared to put in those supplies to deal with a 1986 crop until they are assured there is going to be one.

What is delaying an agreement between the producer organizations and the processors in Alberta is the lack of knowledge of what the federal government's sugar-beet policy, or sugar policy, is going to be. The time for that to be made known is not next week or some time soon, it is now. If those supplies are not put in, it will not be possible to cope with the physical requirements for producing a crop in 1986.

Senator Roblin: I am well aware of my honourable friend's point and I will take it into account.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a few delayed answers to oral questions.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS—REPLACEMENT OF MEMBERS

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the first is in response to a question asked in the Senate some time ago by Senator Frith regarding CN.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): What was that question again?

Senator Roblin: You wanted to know about the directors. Do you want to hear the answer?

Senator Frith: Yes.

Senator Roblin: Some existing board members had philosophical differences with the policy changes the government is enacting at CN. Betty Hughes' resignation was solicited and offered. The three members who resigned on April 30, 1985, also had their resignations solicited following a re-organization of the management structure at CN.

AGRICULTURE

WESTERN CANADA—DROUGHT AND OTHER CONDITIONS— GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, the second question was posed by the Honourable Senator Olson and related to the question of the payment of drought assistance.

The cheques started to go out on February 10, so a good many of them are in the hands of farmers now.

I thought I would reply to that orally because it is a short answer.

MEAT IMPORT ACT

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer in response to a question asked in the Senate on January 28 last by the Honourable Senator Godfrey regarding Meat Import Act—Tabling of Reports.

(The answer follows:)

With reference to the reporting period of the Meat Import Act, the Act simply states:

As soon as practicable after the 31st day of December in each year, the Minister shall prepare and lay before Parliament a report of the operations under this act for that year.

As a result of some procedural problems as to how these reports should be prepared and issued, as well as trade data verification and preparation, the tabling of the 1983 Annual Report was delayed. However many of these problems had been clarified by the time the preparation of the 1984 report had started. Therefore the release of the 1984 report overlapped with the issue of the 1983 report and this resulted in both reports being tabled at the same time.

In the normal course of events, year-end trade data is not available until the middle of the following year. Therefore the preparation of the report cannot begin until that time. It is expected that the 1985 report will be ready shortly after the trade data becomes available. Therefore