

Oral Questions

flexible in terms of giving the provinces credit for programs that they have come up with that will help in bringing the income level of the farmers up for the very disastrous year that we face in 1990.

Our money is on the table, it is ready to be there as soon as we can finalize the respective agreements with each of the provinces. It is a multifaceted problem. There is a different range of problems in each of the provinces and as we develop agreements on those, the money will be available, I can assure the hon. member.

• (1450)

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that the federal contribution in itself is inadequate. Consequently, there is a need for more money and a need for money out there right now.

The farmers are already in the fields. They are already planting in southern Saskatchewan, even as far north as Saskatoon.

Will the farmers now have to wait while there is more federal-provincial wrangling to even receive this minimal assistance? Why does the minister not pay out the money that he has available and do his bickering with the provinces later?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we felt it was important from the standpoint of the federal government to come forth and indicate our willingness, in the form of a five-point very comprehensive program, to assist agriculture in the difficulties that it is undergoing at the present time.

In addition to that, as the hon. member knows, with respect to a future comprehensive safety net program, there is an important review that is taking place in that regard. We expect our first report by this particular committee by the end of April. We hope that will provide the basis from which we can establish a new comprehensive safety net program.

In the meantime, this money and the other proposals that were advanced in our announcement at the end of March, are available. We want to work very closely with the provinces and we are.

I can assure the hon. member that our discussions are ongoing. I met with the Minister of Agriculture from the province of Alberta a couple of days ago. We will be meeting with Manitoba. Discussions are ongoing with Ontario. I can assure him that we consider this to be a very major priority. We want to get the money into the hands of farmers as soon as we possibly can.

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BILL C-21

Mr. Dave Worthy (Cariboo—Chilcotin): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. There is a growing concern by my constituents and people right across Canada about the fate of the many good programs that we promised in Bill C-21, the many training and adjustment programs that are so sorely needed right across the country.

Will the minister give us the status of that bill and indicate when she feels we will be able to deliver on those promises to my constituents.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, it is over a year since we introduced this important piece of legislation which is part of our ongoing commitment to labour adjustment and training that has been a part of our agenda since 1984.

There are many things which I would like to be able to deliver to the hon. member, his constituents, and the constituents of all of us in this House. These include \$350 million per year, ready to be spent on training for UI recipients; further assistance for welfare recipients, something which is very important for urban members particularly; increased allowances for those who are already being trained; a one-third increase which is ready for the Community Futures Program which is important for the hon. member from Newfoundland; \$100 million which is ready to go to older workers and there is more assistance ready for co-op education and apprenticeship.

I realize that these programs are not only important to the people in the House, but the majority of Canadians approve of the direction in which we are going with unemployment insurance.