

Senator Frith: Exactly.

Senator Argue: —as they would like him to be. I would like the Leader of the Government to convey this question to the minister and to bring back to the Senate information on how many meetings the minister has attended. Has he attended more than one?

Senator Roblin: I hope it will make my honourable friend feel better when I tell him that it is my practice whenever a reference is made to a minister, whether or not it involves an answer on my part, to take the precaution of sending a copy of *Hansard* to the minister so he will know what is said about him. I will certainly do that in this case.

Senator Argue: Thank you very much.

REQUEST FOR ANSWERS

Hon. John B. Stewart: Before the Leader of the Government gives us his delayed answers, may I anticipate. He said earlier that he wanted to deal with the business expeditiously. On June 12, I asked him a question concerning studies with regard to the impact of the budget. Specifically, I asked him if there had been an impact study showing the way the budget measures would affect the diverse regions of the country, an impact study similar to the impact study made of its effects on the various income strata of the population. I hope that he will give me my answer today. If he does not, will he provide it tomorrow?

● (1440)

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): I am afraid that I must disappoint my honourable friend. I do not have that answer today and I must tell him that I really do not expect to have it tomorrow either. That does not mean that it has been overlooked or forgotten; it will be attended to.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS

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

AGRICULTURE

SUGAR-BEET INDUSTRY—FUTURE PROSPECTS

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer in response to a question asked in the Senate on May 28 last by the Honourable Senator Olson respecting agriculture and the sugar-beet industry.

(The answer follows:)

Every indication is that both sugar beet processing plants in Western Canada are in good working order and have been well maintained. Department of Agriculture officials have had occasion to visit both the Winnipeg and Taber facility in the last year. The Taber Plant, especially, has recently been upgraded. A consultant's study done

2 years ago reports a sugar refining capacity in Western Canada for at least fifteen years.

In view of the investments by the parent company in these facilities it is likely in their interest to keep them operating. While growers in Alberta were unable to negotiate suitable contract agreements to grow beets for the 1985 crop, BC sugar intended to keep Taber facility open as a packaging and distribution centre.

The Winnipeg plant will be operating as it has in the past. A sugar beet crop was planted this spring in southern Manitoba, although total acreage is estimated to be down slightly.

This fall, in Quebec, la Raffinerie de Sucre du Québec (RSQ) will be in a position to refine sugar beets to the final product, granulated sugar. Previously the plant has only produced a semi-processed product which required further refining.

SUGAR-BEET INDUSTRY—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer in response to a question asked in the Senate on May 28 last by the Honourable Senator Fairbairn. It, too, has to do with the sugar-beet industry, and no doubt my friend will be interested in the previous answer, as well.

(The answer follows:)

In the course of studying alternative options for a national sugar/sweetener policy, the question of other crop production will have to be addressed if the long term viability of the industry does not appear sound.

In 1968, Canada and Dominion sugar closed down its sugar processing facility due to only marginal profits. In the 1968/69 fiscal year \$60 per acre based on 1967 seeded acreage of 16,193 acres was paid to producers to assist in conversion to alternative crops. The total cost of paying 765 growers was \$971,632 (1968 dollars).

The federal government has no short term assistance specifically for the sugar beet producers in Alberta to advise them as to the best alternative crops to sugar beets for 1985. The decision was taken by the farmers not to grow beets this season despite financial assistance from both the provincial and federal governments, assumably because it was not in their best financial interest to do so.

The returns on sugar beet production under the agreements of the contract from BC sugar did not provide enough financial incentive for a sugar beet crop to be planted. This was a business decision taken by the farmers.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

THIRD WORLD—GOVERNMENT AID

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer in response to a question asked on May 28, 1985 by the Honourable Senator Grafstein