

AGRICULTURE

ECONOMIC CRISIS IN PRAIRIE FARM INDUSTRY—REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

Hon. Hazen Argue: Honourable senators, in the absence of Senator Murray, I wonder if I might ask this question and he can have a look at it when he comes back.

A delegation of the three prairie wheat pools came to Ottawa late last year and made a presentation to the government, based on the serious crisis in the agricultural industry on the Prairies. Among other things, they asked for a payment from the federal treasury of some \$500 million.

Since that time there has been a meeting of farm leaders in Regina, Saskatchewan, with the Farm Land Security Board and the Federal Farm Debt Review Board. A *Leader-Post* article of January 19, 1990, states:

By the end of the year, 7,000—or one in nine—Saskatchewan farmers had seen their economic position deteriorate to the point where they were either seeking counselling or debt adjustment or were facing seizure of property or foreclosure.

Not only does that spell out the severity of the crisis but to that one should add the large number of farmers who fold up, give up, and leave farming rather than face the crisis without going to either of these boards.

My question to Senator Murray, through the Deputy Leader of the Government, is: When will the government make a decision on the request of the three prairie pools to take action to meet this serious crisis?

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): I will seek a reply for the senator.

EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION

FISH PLANT CLOSURES IN ATLANTIC COMMUNITIES—LABOUR ADJUSTMENT AID PACKAGE—COMPOSITION OF COMMUNITY FUTURES COMMITTEES IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND NOVA SCOTIA—REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Hon. John B. Stewart: Honourable senators, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, has announced that three Atlantic communities facing impending fish plant closures have been selected for assistance under the Community Futures Program. The announcement says that in Newfoundland the areas selected are the Burin Peninsula, including Grand Bank, and the Southern Shore-St. Mary's Bay, including Trepassy. Then it goes on to say that Guysborough County in Nova Scotia, including Canso, has also been chosen for assistance.

The minister is quoted as having said:

These Community Futures designations are part of a \$130 million assistance package announced by the Honourable John Crosbie on January 5 . . . Atlantic Canadians can be assured of continuing labour adjustment aid including Community Futures support as well as other Canadian Jobs Strategy programs and Industrial Adjustment services.

[Senator Doody.]

The announcement continues with the following comforting words:

Community Futures has a proven track record in helping communities, faced with major layoffs, to develop permanent employment opportunities. Among the available options are small business development, assistance for new entrepreneurs, skills training and relocation assistance.

That expression, "relocation assistance", has an ominous ring to it. Would the Deputy Leader of the Government undertake to get us additional information? Would he undertake, first, to get details of the assistance package announced by the Honourable John Crosbie? Second, would he undertake to tell us what communities are now benefiting? The announcement says that a total of 15 communities in Newfoundland and 11 in Nova Scotia are now benefiting from Community Futures assistance. I ask for that information because, presumably, it will demonstrate the "proven track record."

Third, I should like to have information concerning the organization of Community Futures committees. The announcement says a Community Futures committee is set up in each community to assess their needs and select from an appropriate range of program options.

I wonder if, in the case of Nova Scotia—perhaps some other senator would be interested in Newfoundland—he would tell us the membership of the Community Futures committee in each of the 11 communities that are to benefit from this Community Futures assistance?

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): I shall try to get the information for Senator Stewart.

LABOUR ADJUSTMENT AID PACKAGE—STATUS OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AND NEW BRUNSWICK

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: As a supplementary question, will the deputy leader also get that information for Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick? Apparently they are not mentioned in the announcement. Now the government is going to divide Atlantic Canada into two—the have-nots and the have-have-nots. Perhaps the deputy leader would find out what the government is going to do with Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. I ask him to get the same information for those provinces.

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): I shall certainly try, senators.

THE CONSTITUTION

MEECH LAKE ACCORD—INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS BY PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA—PARALLEL ACCORD—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

Hon. Jack Austin: Honourable senators, I should like to ask the Deputy Leader of the Government to have the government leader respond to this question tomorrow. It has some degree of urgency because of the currency of the Meech Lake issue in Canada, particularly in British Columbia.