

Oral Questions

minister made a statement in Halifax to the effect that the equalization formula as to revenues between the provinces and the federal government would have to be altered. Has there been any consultation with the provinces as to this alteration and, if not, has any been contemplated or is this going to be something that will be imposed upon the provinces willy nilly and with the usual degree of consultation announced the night before?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the preamble of the hon. gentleman. Obviously, there is some pressure on the equalization formula because of the remarkable increase in revenues from oil and gas to the producing provinces. But I have said to the provinces which are affected by equalization that we want to review this. We will be presenting some options to them in some form in time for them to be thoroughly discussed by the provincial ministers of finance and myself at our meetings on December 9 and 10.

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● (1450)

HEALTH

NUTRITIONAL STUDY OF NATIVE PEOPLE—DATE OF PUBLICATION OF REPORT—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO OVERCOME PROTEIN DEFICIENCY

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare and relates to the Nutrition Canada National Survey Report issued a year ago which showed in its preliminary findings a high incidence of nutritional deficiency among native people. Can the minister say when the special nutrition report for Indians and Eskimos promised for last spring, will be released?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member they will be released as soon as possible. I announced last spring that I expected the reports to be completed and available this fall. I understand there has been some problem with translation but it is my hope that the reports will be available before the end of the year or very early next year. I understand it is a matter of production. I would add that they have not been made available to me yet.

Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that a year has passed since the government has had in its possession information which shows significant protein and vitamin deficiencies among native people, can the minister tell the House if a special program has been implemented to come to grips with this general problem? Secondly, have specific nutritional measures been taken to deal with the emergency situation in the Grassy Narrows and White Dog reserves where protein deficiency was emphasized by both the special task force on mercury pollution and the Nutrition Canada report?

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, as far as the first aspect of the question is concerned, I do not think there have been specific measures taken in regard to the Indian and Eskimo population in particular, but proposed regulations

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

have been put forward and made public a few weeks ago aiming at the enrichment of food generally for Canadians. These would obviously cover Indians and Eskimos.

As far as the second part of the question is concerned, this matter was raised in the House last week and it has been discussed with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the provincial governments who have been carrying the main load in this respect.

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RESEARCH

AGENCIES THROUGH WHICH INCREASED FUNDS GIVEN TO INDUSTRY—GOVERNMENT POSITION ON CONTRACTING OUT

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the Minister of State for Science and Technology. A week ago today in answer to a question put by the hon. member for Winnipeg North respecting National Research Council grants, the minister replied that one of the reasons for the decrease in NRC grants was the government policy to encourage research and development in industry. In view of the fact that funds for such programs as IRDIA and PAIT have been decreasing over the last years, could the minister indicate through what programs or agencies this enhanced support for industrial research and development is taking place?

Hon. C. M. Drury (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I think I should like to correct the misapprehension that NRC grants have been cut in recent years. Indeed, that have been rising year by year but not at a rate which corresponds to other increases in expenditures. Similarly, in the case of the PAIT and IRDIA programs, they have also been increasing in levels of expenditure as distinct from the setting of targets or objectives. The actual expenditures as shown in the public accounts will indicate a continuing rise, I think. An element of this incentives program on which we are currently placing much heavier reliance, however, is the increasing research contracting done by government departments rather than doing the research themselves.

Mr. Andre (Calgary Centre): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that in terms of real dollars, with the inflation removed, the support of industrial research and development through IRDIA and PAIT have been going down, and in view of the recently released Statistics Canada data that the contracting out program is not fulfilling expectations in that the percentage of research and development for contracting out to industry has not been rising, can the minister indicate what steps he has taken in his new portfolio to ensure that government policy will be implemented sometime in the reasonably near future and if not, is he going to retract the statement that this is government policy?

Mr. Drury: Mr. Speaker, at the moment I have no specific changes to suggest. We are still in the process of reviewing what is going slowly, and why.