

Canadians. That health station serves the people of that area with great effectiveness. To form some idea of the illnesses afflicting those peoples, I examined the number of people—mostly children—who attended at that health station for vaccinations and other kinds of health services. I found it a satisfactory experience to know Canada had taken that initiative.

That is only one example of what is being done on a fairly broad scale, certainly in the country I visited. I think there are 40 other health stations scattered across that country.

Senator Bonnell: I agree with such a program, but I think there should be more work done in that regard. I thought this was the first step in a major program to save all of the children of Africa, regardless of their language.

Senator Roblin: I cannot share my honourable colleague's optimism that Canada can cure the diseases of all the children of Africa; we can only make a small contribution when one considers the magnitude of the problem, but that does not prevent us from doing the best we can.

AGRICULTURE

POTATO INDUSTRY—GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: Honourable senators, yesterday the Minister of Agriculture for the province of Prince Edward Island made an announcement of provincial government assistance to the potato growers of that province who are going through a difficult financial period. Agriculture in that province is in a crisis situation. The minister announced that \$3 million would be made available to assist the potato growers of that province.

Senator Phillips: It was \$6 million.

Senator Bonnell: Senator Phillips says it is \$6 million. That's even better.

The minister also said he is going to pay \$3 a hundred-weight, or 3 cents a pound, for the potatoes, and that they will be buried in the ground or will be fed to the cattle, or something will be done to get them off the market.

Can the Leader of the Government in the Senate tell me what the Government of Canada and the Minister of Agriculture are going to do to assist those farmers, and what the Government of Canada is going to do in participating with not only Prince Edward Island but also New Brunswick and other provinces involved in the potato growing industry?

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): I know that the subject of potatoes has concerned the Minister of Agriculture for some time, but I am not aware of the situation my honourable friend speaks of. I shall have to take notice of the question.

Senator Bonnell: When the Leader of the Government is looking into that question, perhaps he will be able to tell us soon what assistance or what share of support the federal government might give to the potato growing industry.

Senator Roblin: I give my honourable colleague the same answer I gave previously.

TRANSPORT

NORTHUMBERLAND STRAIT FERRY—DELAY IN COMMENCEMENT OF 1986 SEASON

Hon. M. Lorne Bonnell: Honourable senators, when I travelled our great eastern part of the country—Senator Fairbairn went west, I went east—I noticed a newspaper article stating that the Northumberland ferry from Prince Edward Island to Nova Scotia will not start until May 1 this year. Generally, that service starts on April 1, or as soon as the ice disappears. This year, for some reason or other, it has been announced that that service will not start before May 1. That ferry service has proven to be safer than train travel and airplane travel; no life has been lost yet.

I wonder if the Leader of the Government in the Senate could ask the Minister of Transport to commence that service on April 1 rather than May 1, because at the latter date it will be almost time to terminate service because autumn will be upon us!

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I am surprised to learn that May 1 heralds the coming of autumn in the Northumberland Strait district, but if that is the case, I will certainly ask my colleague, the Minister of Transport, what he is going to do about it.

Senator Bonnell: Could the leader approach the Minister of Transport to ask him to have that service commenced on April 1, as has been the case in previous years? Sometimes in that part of the country we have a bad year, with 11 months of winter and one month of summer.

Senator Roblin: I am not going to tell my colleague, the Minister of State (Tourism), what the honourable senator has just said, because he is trying to persuade a great many Americans that that is the place to go all summer long, and I support his views. I think my friend is too pessimistic, by far.

But, he has asked me if I can ask the Minister of Transport to start this service on April 1 rather than May 1, and I will certainly be glad to do that.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS—UNIVERSALITY—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Gildas L. Molgat: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government in the Senate. In an article in the *Montreal Gazette* of 11 February, I was surprised to see the following statement:

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has also recently hinted that the government may look again at whether to pay money through various social programs to everyone, regardless of need.

Are we to expect from that statement, apparently made by the Prime Minister, that we will have a full-scale debate on universality?

Hon. Duff Roblin (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I do not make myself responsible for newspaper reports.