

must honour that transfer. I am satisfied that the province of Quebec has informed me officially as to the rules of the game—

An hon. Member: It's not a game.

Miss Bégin: —that it is ready to take over the facilities and provide the health services required for the Indians. I would like to inform the hon. member that the social services for Indian communities in Canada are under the responsibility of the Minister of Indian Affairs, not my department.

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NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

ANTICIPATED DROP IN WELL DRILLING ACTIVITY

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In answer to a question last Wednesday, the minister stated to me that he has been aware for some months about the drop off in drilling activity in the oil and gas industry in 1981. I am sure he has seen the recent report which shows the drop off has continued for one further week. What level of drilling activity did the National Energy Program anticipate? Last year there were 9,000 wells and this year it is anticipated there will be 6,000. What level did the National Energy Program anticipate for 1981 and 1982 relative to those figures?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I can say to the hon. member that when we developed the National Energy Program we examined the projections of the drilling companies association which forecast that the drilling industry would operate at only 59 per cent of its capacity this year. We have no additional information on this subject.

[English]

Mr. Wilson: Madam Speaker, I am astounded that the minister is unable to answer a question as basic as that. Let me try to go about it another way. Since the future production of oil in this country is directly related to the drilling activity that is now taking place and will take place in subsequent years, will the minister advise whether the objective of self-sufficiency as set out in the National Energy Program, and the numbers put in that program to achieve that objective, are consistent with the level of drilling activity projected for this year of 6,000 wells?

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, they are certainly not inconsistent with that objective.

Oral Questions AGRICULTURE

HERD MAINTENANCE PROGRAM—DELAY OF PAYMENT IN DISPUTED CASES

Mr. Vic Althouse (Humboldt-Lake Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for PFRA. As we approach the end of March the herd maintenance review board is reported to be holding about 4,000 cases in which a dispute exists between the review board and PFRA officials as to whether a payment should be made. Since at some point ministerial intervention will be required, can the minister tell us what kinds of issues are being reviewed, whether he will be looking at changes to the snowfall data being used to determine precipitation, whether there will be changes to use actual rather than extrapolated rainfall data, or will superior farming techniques be allowed to go into the computation? If none of these, what will his criteria be?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, I am surprised that the hon. member is speaking of a dispute between the review board and PFRA. There can be no dispute because the only authority of the review board, PFRA or the minister responsible for PFRA, is to implement the criteria set by Treasury Board. There can be no discretion as to whether to issue a payment except in accordance with the regulation of Treasury Board. That is the first step. I hope that all cases will be processed before April 15. Then all cases worthy of further consideration will be sent to me. Cabinet and Treasury Board will then have to decide which of those which have been rejected should be paid. This is the second step which is beyond the authority of the review board, PFRA or the minister. It will be cabinet and Treasury Board which says that.

• (1500)

Mr. Althouse: I hope members of the Treasury Board will be aware that there was a meeting at Invermay over the weekend with about 240 affected producers present, of whom over 90 per cent had applied for payment and had been turned down. Of the 240, some seven had received cheques. Even though a number of them had crops of two to three bushels per acre they were not eligible; they had no hay and spent \$20,000 for Ontario hay. Will the minister assure us that Treasury Board will be given this information and use it to redraw the requirements under the program so that in the end justice will prevail for these producers?

Mr. De Bané: Madam Speaker, I will certainly bring to the attention of my colleagues all those cases which are worthy of further consideration. Second, while I do admit the program does not help every person who has suffered from this drought, if we compare what the federal government has been doing for farmers with what the provincial governments, particularly the government of Saskatchewan, have been doing, I do not think there has been any relationship whatsoever between our efforts and the efforts of provincial governments.