

Oral Questions

money. There is between 60 per cent and 80 per cent unemployed on most reserves. The situation is desperate. At the same time, could he assist the House by telling us how many native Indian people will be employed under the initiative that he is now signing with the Provinces?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to respond to the Member on that question, particularly to tell him and Members of the House that, just last Friday, the Minister of Indian Affairs and I worked out an agreement whereby some \$21 million under the NEED program would be directly allocated to work on Indian reserves across Canada, particularly to help native people in the development, restoration and construction of housing on reserves. So we have been able to use the NEED programs as a way of providing major assistance to native people in those particular areas.

In addition to that, my colleague, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and I were successfully able to negotiate and complete a Northlands Agreement with the Province of Manitoba for about \$160 million, to provide major employment opportunities for native people. So we are trying to use a number of existing programs that the federal Government offers as a way of targeting directly at those particular needs.

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AGRICULTURE**APPLICATION OF FEED FREIGHT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO MARITIME FARMERS**

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister is aware that there is enough underdeveloped agricultural land in the Maritimes at least to double the output of livestock and poultry in that region. However, with the Minister's proposal to can the Crow, Maritime producers have been put under a tremendous handicap. The cost of feed grain in the Maritime region will now be crippling. Will the Minister address himself to the plight of farmers in the Maritime region and come up with a formula under the Feed Freight Assistance Program which will at least give them parity with their Prairie brothers?

● (1430)

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I have met with representatives of the Maritime Provinces in the last few days. We are very much aware of their concerns, but we think that a lot of them are unwarranted, for instance the increase in the price of grain. What really rules the price of grain is the Chicago market. The Chicago market will rule the price of corn and barley no matter where it is sold, in the world or in eastern Canada.

They will not be at the disadvantage which the Hon. Member is saying. If the agri-food strategy is developed like we say it should be developed, they will be in a position where they

will be more competitive than ever. That land will be developed under the programs which we are developing. We intend to work in co-operation with them.

Mr. Corbett: Madam Speaker, the Minister will know that what controls the price of feed grain now in the Atlantic region, as across the nation, is the Minister's decisions which he alone will be taking.

DIVISION OF FUNDS BETWEEN QUEBEC AND NEW BRUNSWICK

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. His Department has earmarked \$130 million to assist those regions which are not now self-sufficient to become self-sufficient in grain production. I think that is commendable. Will the Minister advise the farmers of New Brunswick what strange formula or strange new math he used in divvying up the particular \$130 million which gave Quebec \$90 million and the Province of New Brunswick a paltry \$4 million?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I am sure the Hon. Member has read the agri-food strategy and what it says about developing all potential agricultural areas we have, and how they can be developed. Those which can be developed to the greatest economic advantage will be the ones developed first. We say that New Brunswick, for instance, has a tremendous potential. The Province has a role to play, but for years the Province of New Brunswick neglected agriculture in that Province, probably more than any other Province in Canada. That is not true at the present time. The Minister who is there at the present time seems to want to go ahead and develop agriculture in New Brunswick. We can do that together.

The programs which we have in that Province are commendable. They are good, they are working. The Hon. Member said "a paltry" sum. If one checks the productivity of New Brunswick as against Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Ontario, for example, which receives \$16 million, one will see that Ontario has a grain surplus producing area. It will produce a million tonnes of surplus grain to be sold on world markets, et cetera, and that type of thing. I am sure the new program for productivity in New Brunswick will make it what the Hon. Member wants it to be and what we all want it to be—a much more productive area than it is at the present time.

EASTERN APPLE PRODUCERS—REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Hon. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Will he tell the House what his Department has done with regard to requests for assistance to eastern Canadian apple producers whose orchards suffered severe, irreparable, and extensive frost damage in the winter of 1981, and subsequently?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member has brought this to my attention, as have other Hon. Members, especially those from the