PAY EQUITY

INCOME TAX IMPLICATION FOR HOSPITAL WORKERS—STRENGTHENING OF FEDERAL PAY EQUITY PROVISIONS—STRENGTHENING OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION LEGISLATION

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer in response to a question asked in the Senate on December 20 last by the Honourable Senator Marsden respecting Pay Equity—Income Tax Implication for Hospital Workers—Strengthening of Federal Pay Equity Provisions—Strengthening of Human Rights Commission Legislation.

(*The answer follows:*)

The federal government is committed to equal pay for work of equal value.

The *Canadian Human Rights Act*, which is enforced by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, requires employers to pay men and women equally for work of equal value. If they do not, a Tribunal can order an employer to provide equal pay. In addition, Labour Canada has a program of education and inspections to enforce the equal pay provisions of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. After an in-depth study of pay in the public service, the Treasury Board recently announced back pay of $317 million and additional pay increases for over 70,000 female public servants to ensure that they are receiving equal pay. The government is conducting an overall review of the Act. However, we are pleased with the progress we are making in the area of pay equity, and we continue to be committed to ensuring that men and women receive equal pay for work of equal value.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

CRITICISM OF ECONOMIC POLICY BY ADVOCACY GROUPS—POSSIBLE CUT-BACK IN FUNDING

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer in response to a question asked in the Senate on February 13 last by the Honourable Senator Marsden respecting Health and Welfare—Criticism of Economic Policy by Advocacy Groups—Possible Cut-back in Funding.

(*The answer follows:*)

The government believes in the value of the work of the National Council of Welfare and other such advisory groups. We believe that funds used in support of organizations that bring a variety of different opinions to bear on the policy making process, is money well spent.

The National Council of Welfare in particular has a mandate to advise the government on social welfare issues. The government believes it is important that the Council continue its work in this area, and will continue to lend all the support possible, within the constraints of the difficult fiscal climate, to the operations of the Council.

AGRICULTURE

FARM CREDIT CRISIS—POSITION OF FARM CREDIT CORPORATION

PRAIRIE WHEAT POOLS—POSITION OF GOVERNMENT

Hon. C. William Doody (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer in response to a question asked in the Senate on January 30 last by the Honourable Senator Olson respecting Agriculture—Farm Credit Crisis—Position of Farm Credit Corporation and Prairie Wheat Pools—Position of Government.

(*The answer follows:*)

1. In responding to this question, I want to begin with some background analysis. As the Honourable Senator knows, three main factors impacted on the financial well-being of grain producers during the 80's. They were unfavourable market prices, crop failures and unmanageable debt obligations. These events were unexpected in their extent and severity. At the same time, all producers were not affected in the same way or, for some farmers, to the same degree.

As Senators are well aware, grain producers were all directly and negatively affected by the low market prices. On top of the low prices, some producers experienced one, two or more crop failures. Some other producers had low prices and unmanageable debt. And some of these, a smaller but still significant number, had low prices, crop failure and unserviceable debt. While any one of these events is serious in itself, the situation of the group that experienced all three circumstances has been by far the most difficult.

The government has responded by providing $21.7 billion worth of assistance to the agricultural community and almost $12 billion to grain and oilseeds farmers. This support has included special income assistance to compensate producers for the unexpectedly low prices through the Special Canadian Grains Programs I and II and through the write-off of producer contributions under the Western Grain Stabilization Act (WGSA). The government has provided special drought assistance over and above crop insurance and it developed and put in place an enhanced crop insurance program. It has also imposed a moratorium on foreclosure actions by FCC and then introduced the Farm Debt Review Board process to mediate debt restructuring for farms in financial difficulty. This process provides opportunity to make arrangements to enable the family to maintain the farm, if at all possible. The Farm Credit Corporation has been provided with funds to make concessions appropriate to the circumstances. In those cases where no farming solution is possible and if the family so desires, the Canadian Rural Transition Program helps the family make the adjustment to alternative employment or business.

With respect to the current situation and income prospects for 1990, the government acknowledges and appreciates the work of the Senate Committee on