

*Oral Questions*

few days after the presentation of this much needed new budget on Monday night?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I will do my very best to accommodate the hon. member.

## INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Madam Speaker, I had a question for the Prime Minister but, in his absence, I will put it to the Minister of Finance. As a result of the Prime Minister's trip to western Canada last weekend, I should like to put a question to find out what he learned.

There have been a number of lay-offs, shutdowns, bankruptcies and closures in western Canada, including the Cominco Smelter at Trail and Kimberley Mines with 6,300 lay-offs; one quarter of the 12,800 forestry workers in B.C. laid off; in Alberta over 50,000 people laid off; in the Yukon 250 people laid off at Whitehorse Copper; Ipsco in Regina has laid off hundreds, and there have been cutbacks, lay-offs and shutdowns in every northern Manitoba community. I recognize that the list is too long to allow me to go on, Madam Speaker. May I ask the Minister of Finance if the Prime Minister learned anything as a result of his trip?

**Madam Speaker:** The hon. member for Churchill on a supplementary.

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## FINANCE

## QUERY RESPECTING MEASURES TO BE CONTAINED IN NEW BUDGET

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Madam Speaker, I presume the answer to my previous question is no.

During that same trip the Prime Minister complained about the conservatives in the Liberal Party. Perhaps he was talking about the federal cabinet. Will the Minister of Finance assure the country that this grandson of the November budget will not be another Conservative budget in drag, but that it will actually do something to produce housing starts and lower interest rates in this country?

**Madam Speaker:** The hon. member for York-Peel.

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## THE ECONOMY

## EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Madam Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Finance. As the minister has been contemplating his budget, Mark II or III, could he inform the House, after reflection, to what extent he believes government spending and ballooning deficits have

contributed to inflation, high interest rates, and the general economic decline in our country?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is asking me to give an opinion on matters upon which he ought to be able to make up his own mind. If he wants to ask a question with respect to government policy I would be pleased to answer him, but I believe his question really is in the world of opinion in which he is as expert as I am.

## EFFECT OF NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Madam Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance again if he would give us the benefit of his reflections at the present time. If he likes to say it is government policy, so be it. Has he come to any conclusion about the extent to which the National Energy Program and energy pricing have contributed to some of the economic malaise in this country, in particular the state of the oil and gas industry, the decline of our dollar, and high interest rates?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Yes, Madam Speaker, I did come to some conclusions on those points. I tried to set them out yesterday in my speech to the House of Commons when I said it was absolutely false to attribute all the difficulties that exist in the oil industry to the National Energy Program. My colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, took part in the debate last evening and illustrated very clearly that the same problems which Canada faces in that industry, exist in the United States. I do not believe that the National Energy Program has been introduced in the United States; at least *Business Week* magazine has not told us that yet.

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## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

## EXTENT OF BUDGET DEBATE

**Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the government House leader. The Minister of Finance has already indicated that next Monday night he will make a budget statement. Is it the intention of the government House leader and of the government to have a full budget debate following that statement? Second, will the government bring forward legislation pursuant to that budget?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, according to the Standing Orders of the House, when a budget is brought down, it is followed by six days of debate, and it is up to the government to decide on which days the debate will take place. During the session, we have, on occasion, interrupted the budget debate to consider various bills. As far as the present situation is concerned, I