

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Indeed, Madam Speaker, that is our policy.

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**INCOME TAX****BENEFITS TO NORTHERN RESIDENTS—GOVERNMENT POLICY IN RESPECT THEREOF**

**Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue. In view of the uncertainty regarding income tax issues in the north with respect to the fringe benefits traditionally granted to northern residents, will the minister assure this House that this government will bring in an amendment to the Income Tax Act, or a ways and means motion to give validity retroactively to the present moratorium?

**Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue):** Madam Speaker, we have placed a moratorium on the collection of taxation on northern benefits until January, 1981. That applies for the taxation year 1980. We are looking at the year 1979. We have stopped assessments on the year 1979. Officials are now working to clarify exactly how this moratorium will apply, and I am hoping I can make a comment within the next week or so.

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**AGRICULTURE****PAY-OUT TO BEEF AND PORK PRODUCERS**

**Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. I wonder if the minister could indicate to the House what the date of the announcement will be as to whether there is going to be any pay-out under the Agricultural Stabilization Act for the beef and hog industry.

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. member is well aware that by law we have to make a payment for the pork industry. We may make one for the beef industry. That has not been decided. But before the end of April I hope that an announcement can be made for the pork industry.

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**FORESTRY****EMPLOYMENT OF IDLE WORK FORCE DUE TO HIGH INTEREST RATES**

**Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River):** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment in his capacity as having jurisdiction over forestry. The forest industry is one of the first industries which suffers as a result of a massive downturn in economies and high interest rates,

and thousands of forest workers are unemployed at the present time.

The question is whether it has occurred to the minister to discuss with his colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, and his provincial counterparts the prospect of engaging this idle work force in the task of forest renewal, planting and restocking millions of acres of unproductive forest land.

**Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment):** Madam Speaker, we as a government do, indeed, attach considerable importance to the revitalization of the forest industry and, indeed, the continuation of the thrust which has been developed by the past two ministers responsible for forestry. I spoke about that subject a few days ago, and I would be happy to send the hon. member my speech. In any case, I will take up the suggestion he has made to me and discuss it with my colleague.

● (1500)

**Mr. Oberle:** Madam Speaker, I have read the minister's speech and I want to compliment him on his commitment to follow the policy which the former government laid down for a forestry strategy for Canada. Can he tell the House whether it is his intention immediately to give us the name of the assistant deputy minister who should be appointed to restore the position of the Canadian forestry in the public service?

**Mr. Roberts:** That matter is under very active consideration. I cannot give the hon. member a name at the present time, but I hope to announce one in the very near future.

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**PRIVACY****OPENING OF MAIL BY RCMP**

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General, whom I should like to congratulate on his appointment. The Solicitor General stated recently that he has made up his mind that the RCMP need the power to open first-class mail, and that he is "rushing to cabinet" to bring in legislation to grant this power—a very serious interference with the right to privacy of Canadians.

Will the Solicitor General assure the House that he will take no action on this matter at least until the McDonald commission has reported; and will he tell the House what evidence he has, if any, to support the granting of this serious power to the RCMP?

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General):** May I thank the hon. member for his good wishes and also for the opportunity to correct the record. I am not rushing legislation forward; I am quite content to wait for the recommendations of the McDonald commission, and I am particularly pleased to indicate that, as hon. members know, the McDonald commission will