

[English]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

OIL COMPANY PRICE INCREASES—ACTION ON PRICES AND INCOMES COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. What action is the minister taking on the report of the Prices and Incomes Commission dealing with the prices of oil refinery products in which it is claimed that the 1970 price increases by the oil refineries increased their profits far out of proportion to their operating costs?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have already explained to the House that we were and are examining that report, but there are difficulties in determining what measures should be taken to counteract the situation revealed by the report. In a general way, of course, we have introduced legislation this morning which would increase, hopefully, the competitiveness within that particular industry, for instance, and would undoubtedly have a beneficial effect on the situation reported on by the Prices and Incomes Commission.

Mr. McGrath: Has the minister, under the Combines Investigation Act, examined the recent increases in the cost of petroleum products in Canada by oil refineries?

Mr. Basford: The Prices and Incomes Commission did that.

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FINANCE

RECOMMENDATION THAT OLD AGE SECURITY TAX NOT BE APPLIED TO INCOMES UNDER \$4,000

Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway): I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In line with the brief yesterday of the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, is it the intention of the minister to recommend that the old age security tax be not applied to the returns of persons living on incomes not exceeding \$4,000?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I am not aware of all the implications of the report to which the hon. member referred. However, I will look into it.

Mrs. MacInnis: While the minister is looking into it, would he consider the fact that his proposal today not to tax family allowances would indicate that a similar measure could well be applied to the incomes of old age security pensioners?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is a representation for the consideration of the minister.

Inquiries of the Ministry

INDIAN AFFAIRS

CLOSURE OF OFFICE AT TRURO, NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North): I have a question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Is it the intention of the minister to delay the closure of the Indian Affairs office at Truro, Nova Scotia, due to take place tomorrow in view of the strong reaction by members of the Millbrook Reserve who are severely upset by the decision of the department?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position to make any comments on this for the time being. I merely understand that prior to the taking of decisions, the regional director made arrangements to consult with the Indian populations concerned and, from what I have been told, the Indians had agreed to this transfer.

In any event, I will review the case and let the hon. member know about my findings.

[English]

LAND CLAIMS COMMISSION—BROADENING OF TERMS OF REFERENCE TO INCLUDE ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): My question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Inasmuch as the president of the National Indian Brotherhood indicated before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Constitution that that association will not co-operate with the Barber commission on Indian land claims until such time as aboriginal rights are included in the terms of reference, will the minister now broaden the terms of reference so that this important work of settling Indian land claims may proceed?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I must advise the House that the Commissioner for Indian land claims, Dr Barber, is not under my jurisdiction, as he was appointed by an order in council and is directly responsible to the Prime Minister.

As to the matter itself, we are now examining the situation and if there is something to state, we shall indicate it in due course.

[English]

Mr. Dinsdale: In a speech made recently by the hon. gentleman to the Big Brothers Association of Canada he said:

So go easy, proceed on a partnership basis, remember that Indian people are often sensitive about people who wish to help them—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me that the hon. member should ask the question as quickly as possible.

Mr. Dinsdale: Based on that quotation, would the minister follow his advice and act on a partnership basis in this regard?