

Oral Questions

is not the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development but rather the Minister responsible for small business.

Mr. Crosbie: No one is responsible. Nothing but excuses.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): The Hon. Member might be able to access that fund better on behalf of his constituents if he were aware of the right Ministry, to start with.

Mr. Crosbie: Not even Mr. Trudeau is responsible.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): As far as what the Hon. Member is talking about is concerned, it is quite true, Mr. Speaker, that the Indian people in northern British Columbia—

Mr. Crosbie: Eugene Whelan should be responsible.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East):—do have some very serious problems with regard to the social impacts of various projects taking place there. I can tell the Hon. Member that I have talked to the Indian people as recently as two weeks ago, and it is considered a priority in terms of getting them that type of funding. That is one of the key priorities across the whole nation as far as myself and my Department are concerned.

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FINANCE**FUEL TAX PAID BY FARMERS AND FISHERMEN—REQUEST FOR REMOVAL**

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Two days ago in answering my colleague, the Hon. Member for Brandon-Souris, he asked the farmers and fishermen to share in the burden of taxation when paying the fuel tax as it applied to farmers and fishermen. That, as the Minister knows, generates a 100 per cent profit of \$250 million for the federal Government, and is a direct cost of food production passed on to the consumers. Only the Government benefits from this. Will the Minister revise his concept of "sharing" and think of sharing the \$250 million profit the Government makes, with consumers, and remove that tax from the farmers and fishermen?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has a strange notion of taxes. He seems to be scandalized by the fact that taxes mean revenue for the Government. That is what they are by definition. Indeed, there are a number of taxes which bring revenues to the Government. However, we are facing a situation where, in spite of our revenues, we still have a large deficit about which the Hon. Member's Party complains all the time, including today.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: And the "Member from Bay Street".

Mr. Lalonde: I would suggest, therefore, that the Hon. Member should talk to his colleagues and get their act together.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: How about the "Member from Bay Street"?

Mr. Lalonde: Do those Hon. Members want to have a larger or a smaller deficit? They do not seem to be able to get their acts together at all. I would also like to tell the Hon. Member that he should mention in his question the large amounts of money which the federal Government is transferring to farmers in the form of grants or support for their activities. I have indicated that these amounts are in excess of a billion dollars this year—and that is not bad—from the federal Government.

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ABORIGINAL RIGHTS**INUVIALUIT AGREEMENT—STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO MINISTER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, if I can get his attention. The Inuvialuit agreement which has been negotiated, and which has been cleared through Cabinet, is now going through the ratification procedure with the Inuvialuit in the Northwest Territories. The Minister, I believe, on the weekend said, and I am paraphrasing, "If you do not accept this, you are not going to get anything". Does the Minister not think, Mr. Speaker, that that is a form of blackmail, forcing the Inuvialuit to accept this agreement, because he said if it is not accepted there would be no renegotiation of the agreement?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I do not remember saying—and I see he has a press release from me in his hand—"you are not going to get anything".

Mr. Epp: It is probably someone else.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): I am prepared to talk to him about various programs of one kind or another. However, if he is referring to the agreement, I would tell him that this is an agreement which the COPE organization wanted, asking me to go to Cabinet to get it approved in terms of the final agreement. This was after working out many problems with respect to the CYI and the Dene Metis, all the overlapping questions, and everything else. We worked it out and got it approved on the terms they were prepared to accept. They have taken it back to get final approval.

Is the Hon. Member suggesting that we should open up an agreement every time there is some difference of opinion? If that were the case we would never get any comprehensive claims settled in the entire Arctic. Of course, it would weaken its position very drastically if the Government indicated it was prepared to be flexible every time we reached a final agreement with the native people on the terms they wanted. If there was no finality to it, it would undermine the whole comprehensive claims process.