

Mr. Blackburn: It is called free enterprise.

Mr. Whiteway: Has the minister looked at this?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Chairman, I wish I could give the hon. member a precise answer to his question; but those questions concerning the administration of the program should be asked in committee when the ministers responsible are present. I will not comment on their behalf in regard to those technical questions.

Mr. Whiteway: My fourth question is: as was indicated this morning on the CBC, there were approximately 60,000 grants applied for, and only 3,000 cheques were sent out in reference to the program. Does the minister project that all the funds will be used this year? If not, will he carry the surplus funds left over into next year's program?

Mr. Chrétien: I think the hon. member would be well advised to deal with his fifth question right away, because this is another question about the management of the program for which I am not responsible.

Mr. Whiteway: Mr. Chairman, my fifth question is critical to me because I grew up on the south shore of Nova Scotia, although I represent the keystone province of Manitoba. My question will be very simple. It will put my mind to rest, as well as the minds of hundreds of thousand of Canadians, particularly from Nova Scotia. My question is—

Mr. Paproski: Will the minister resign?

Mr. Whiteway: Was any political consideration given to making the provinces of Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia tax-free under this program?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to tell the hon. member that there was absolutely no such consideration. It was strictly relative to the fact that Prince Edward and Nova Scotia were dependent on oil. All the figures were looked at before a decision was reached, because we were aware of that very difficult problem. It would have been easier to include another province which had the same situation. Then we would not have been accused of acting in the way we did because these two provinces have Liberal governments. We are not stupid—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Don't mislead the House.

Mr. Paproski: Once a Liberal, always a Liberal.

Mr. Douglas (Bruce-Grey): We have to have a chance to speak once in a while.

Mr. Chrétien: I am glad the hon. member asked that question. There was absolutely no such consideration given to that. It was related to the fact that these two provinces have been hit more than any other province by the increase in the price of oil.

Income Tax

Mr. Whiteway: Mr. Chairman, I have a supplementary to my fifth question.

Mr. Benjamin: He has had his five questions.

Mr. Whiteway: This is question No. 5(b).

The Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The hon. member for Selkirk has 20 minutes in which to make his speech.

Mr. Whiteway: When I was growing up down on the south shore of Nova Scotia, one afternoon I had my dog out in the woods, and I had my old twist steel 16-gauge shotgun. I wanted to teach my dog how to retrieve. I had my gun loaded. I threw a stick out, shot, and the old dog never moved.

An hon. Member: It must have been a Liberal.

Mr. Whiteway: Rather than shoot the dog, I decided to give the old boy another chance. Therefore I will give the minister another chance. I am wondering whether, on closer reflection, the minister might repent and decide to tell us the truth—

Mr. Fraser: Or be shot.

Mr. Whiteway: We will not hold it against him. There are only two provinces in Confederation with Liberal governments. We realize those provinces are struggling. Perhaps the minister might come clean and tell us if there was any political consideration given to making Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia tax free under the program?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Chairman, I can only repeat what I said when the hon. member was not in the House. I should like to give the figures for the percentage of electricity generated by thermal processes. Newfoundland is 1.7 per cent; Prince Edward Island is 100 per cent; Nova Scotia is 83.1 per cent; New Brunswick is 32.5 per cent; and Quebec is 0.3 per cent. Therefore the figures indicate those provinces which were suffering most because of the increase in the price of oil.

We have designed a scheme to help those provinces face their difficulties. We have applied the normal principle in this land: when there is a disaster in one area, we attempt to help. All day long members have been accusing us of doing our job because of the political stripes of those provinces. That is absolutely not true.

I am pleased that the hon. member asked his question. I am a little bit of a politician, and I had a funny reaction when I was confronted with that scheme. Sometimes we have to make difficult decisions, and the cosmetics of them are not easily defended. Not only did we want to help those provinces in regard to insulation, we wanted to find a way to help those people who, by sheer accident of nature, were dependent more upon oil than any other part of Canada.

Mr. Whiteway: Perhaps the minister can answer this question: why was the principle not maintained of having those best able to pay being given the least from government help, which they do not need? Why was the grant in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island not \$1,000 or \$2,000, and maintain the