

Oral Questions

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I gave the answer last week in my response to the hon. member's question. I repeat it today. Every member of the House uses taxpayers' money when he sends a copy of his speech out to his constituents in the various parts of Canada. The Tory party does it, the New Democratic Party does it, as do we.

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INCOME TAX**POLICY APPLICABLE TO RESIDENTS OF NORTHERN REGIONS**

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, as is customary at this time of the year I would like to ask the Minister of National Revenue a question with regard to the taxation of northerners and northern benefits. He has used the terms "equity and fairness", and "ability to pay", which is one of the underlying criteria used in the tax legislation to establish regional taxation differences. Can the minister tell me whether the study which has been going on for some time in his department with respect to the critical problems of the gap in the cost of living between the north and the south is yet complete? Does the minister have anything to report to the House today with respect to any future policies which the government might adopt to redress this serious situation?

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I want to tell him that the moratorium that we put in place will be in place until the end of 1981. I announced that decision the day before the budget of my colleague, the Minister of Finance, was announced. There have been some discussions between a number of departments, including the Department of Finance and my own department. I have nothing further to report on future policy at this time. The moratorium on the taxation of northern benefits is still in place and will remain in place until the end of 1981.

Mr. Oberle: It would, of course, be crucially important to consult some northerners about future policies which may be adopted by the government.

LETTER SENT BY PRESIDENT OF CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister how he plans to respond to the letter he received from the President of the Canadian Labour Congress, Mr. McDermott, wherein he makes the suggestion that the government either appoint or establish a parliamentary task force or a royal commission to study the question of northern taxation. The letter the minister received was also sent to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, and others. Can the minister tell the House whether it is his intention to broaden the inquiry and establish such a commission or task force? Failing that, is the minister at least

intending to meet with northerners to arrive at a position which would, indeed, be equitable and fair to all Canadians?

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, I have already met with a great many northerners as a result of the intervention of my colleague, the Minister of State (Mines).

An hon. Member: Who?

Mr. Rompkey: I have met with representatives of the Mining Association of Canada, with representatives of the governments of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, with the Steelworkers Association, with the Canadian Teachers Federation and with a number of different interested groups, as well as my own colleagues, with regard to this situation. I thank the hon. member for his own contribution which was in the form of a very useful brief.

There is wide-ranging discussion on this particular issue. We intend to take into account all points of view. Until such time as a further decision is made with regard to future policy, the moratorium will stay in place.

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SMALL BUSINESS**TRIDENT AIRCRAFT CORPORATION—GOVERNMENT SUPPORT**

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism). I would like to remind him of some commitments which were made by his government to an aircraft company in my riding in Sidney, called the Trident Aircraft Corporation. Can the minister briefly outline the connection that this government now has with Trident in terms of financial support and in terms of support personnel?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Madam Speaker, I do not have a detailed answer to this question at hand. However, if the hon. member will give me some time, I shall be happy to report on this matter tomorrow.

[*English*]

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Madam Speaker, the minister is gathering this information. I hope he will put it on the record in the House.

Will the minister also give a history of the connection with the company, which quite clearly was a loser at the beginning and which was used by his party to gain votes during the last election—a matter which failed abysmally?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lapointe (Charlevoix): Madam Speaker, I strongly deny the unwarranted statements made by the hon. member. I would like to tell him that when the government can come to