

the Government that when a Minister of the Crown speaks on public issues in public, that Minister is speaking for the Government.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, if he is stating government policy.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Yes, if he is stating government policy. If he is discussing the time of day, he is not speaking for the Government.

IDENTIFICATION OF MINISTERS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, the question of course is: how do we know when a Minister of the Crown is stating government policy? I remember years ago a former Minister distinguished between bears that lived in national parks and those that did not, by painting red the posteriors of the bears that did not live in national parks. Is it the suggestion of the Prime Minister that we distinguish when Ministers are speaking for the Government by painting the posteriors of Ministers, perhaps red, when they are speaking for themselves?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDermid: It would be a pleasant change from the red faces over there.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member is making an ungracious allusion to the red Tories in his own Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

REQUEST FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF INITIAL GRAIN PRICES

Mr. Len Gustafson (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. The Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board, Senator Hazen Argue in the other place, has failed to announce to farmers the initial price of grain for the coming year. Farmers cannot stand the financial strain of falling grain prices, nor can farmers tolerate the Government playing politics with the important announcement of the initial price of grain. Will the Minister immediately announce the initial price of grain for the coming crop year so that farmers can plan their seeding operations?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that Senator Argue in the other place has already made a statement concerning the initial payments for grain. He indicated that he will be making that announcement before seeding begins so that farmers will have that initial advantage. I cannot give the Hon. Member the

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specific date, but I believe the commitment of the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board will be fulfilled in a very short period of time.

REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Len Gustafson (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Senator in the other place has been making several announcements and several statements. What we are asking for is an announcement of the initial price of grain for farmers who are beginning their operations in the fields, and who need to know the direction for planting their crops in this coming year. Will he make an announcement immediately so that farmers can plan their planting operations?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I could only once again repeat my earlier answer. The other place is a useful, legitimate forum in which government policy is announced. The Minister responsible for the Wheat Board is a member of that particular Chamber. He will be making an announcement at the earliest possible date in order to allow farmers to undertake the advanced planning that is required. I will take notice of the Hon. Member's representations so that the Hon. Senator will be able to respond in a very short period of time.

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● (1450)

INDIAN AFFAIRS

PLIGHT OF LUBICON BAND IN ALBERTA

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Last Fall Doctor Anwar Barkat of the World Council of Churches' Program to Combat Racism wrote to the Prime Minister concerning the Lubicon Lake Indian band in northern Alberta. He wrote that the Alberta Government and multinational oil companies "have taken actions which could have genocidal consequences" for the band. After detailing these actions, he said that the Lubicon people "cannot be expected to survive as a people unless they receive immediate financial, political and legal help". Was the Prime Minister made aware of the contents of this letter? Did he answer it? What action did he take in response to this urgent plea for justice?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it escapes me at the time as to whether I have seen that letter, but I will take notice of the question and give the Hon. Member an answer.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO MEET LEGAL COSTS

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, this question has been a front page story in the news for the last week, although the letter was written six months ago. It was an urgent plea for justice.