

INQUIRY AS TO HOUSING PROGRAM
ON RESERVATIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Robert Simpson (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I have a related question for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In view of the reported change from a five year to a seven year housing program, can the minister say whether it is planned to have these houses serviced with water and sewerage at the conclusion of the seven years?

Hon. Arthur Laing (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): No, Mr. Speaker, I do not think we could give such an assurance, because certain areas simply do not lend themselves to the introduction of these services.

I might say, with reference to the original five year plan, that we have not quite been keeping pace with the plan, and its extension to seven years is not as serious as it seems. I think we are doing a reasonably good job in housing on the Indian reservations, but I cannot give the hon. member the assurance he requests with respect to the provision of sewerage and water facilities.

Mr. Simpson: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the statement made by the deputy minister in Tuktoyaktuk a year ago, that all the Eskimo and Indian houses would be provided with sewers and water within five years, has there been a change in the program since then?

Mr. Laing: I am quite certain that if the deputy minister made that statement, and I cannot recall whether or not he made it, he was not referring to the Indian residents in the provincial areas of Canada.

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): Can the minister inform us whether the areas in which the house construction program has been slowed down have already been designated, or is this matter to be negotiated?

Mr. Laing: Mr. Speaker, I should like to explain to the house that the co-operation of Indian bands is required in all these instances, and those which have been most energetic have received consideration before the others. I think this is also to be expected in the future.

BUDGETARY PROPOSALS

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE
MINISTER OF FINANCE

The house resumed, from Friday, December 8, consideration of the motion of Hon.

27053—332½

The Budget—Mr. Graftey

Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance) that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair for the house to go into committee of ways and means, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Monteith (page 5118).

Mr. Heward Graftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, Canadians today learned that the high command of the present government, having satisfied itself that the nation's business was in order, has issued a position paper on the Leader of the Opposition—a most interesting exercise. Evidently a bankrupt government prefers to substitute political ploys for public policy. One adjective used to describe the hon. gentleman was "reluctant". In truth, that word is not only a description of the present government but is its very definition. I ask every member in every corner of the house: What are the people of Canada saying today with reference to the word "reluctant"? What other government in the history of this country has been more reluctant to defend, lead and define the federal cause, and more reluctant to act in the face of rampant inflation and the nation's most serious housing crisis?

Mr. Chrétien: Oh, oh.

Mr. Graftey: The minister says "oh, oh". Will he deny that the part of the country he represents is deeply affected by this crisis?

Mr. Chrétien: These matters will be dealt with at the federal-provincial conference.

Mr. Graftey: That is the trouble; instead of acting the government is calling conferences.

Mr. Chrétien: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi is the last member to criticize me for referring to the federal-provincial conference, because he proposes a secretariat to organize more of these meetings.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Mr. Speaker, this is not a question of privilege.

The Deputy Speaker: The minister must state his question of privilege.

Mr. Graftey: One of the reasons that this government is losing the confidence of the people is that they feel that conferences, symposiums, meetings and committee hearings replace action. What we really want is action, and if the minister thinks that what we are getting in the west block is action he