

Oral Questions

Environment): Madam Speaker, the hon. member must be aware that the decision made by the government of British Columbia is entirely within its competence because the resource is provincial. The hon. member allows us to make the point that this government never does have and never has had the intention to tell the governments of the provinces what to do with their resources; we have confidence in their ability.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hees: You get full marks for comedy.

Mr. Kristiansen: Madam Speaker, I can assure the parliamentary secretary that this party is quite aware of the prerogatives of the provinces when it comes to resources. What it does prove, in fact, is that laws and constitutions cannot stop fools from acting like fools.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kristiansen: In view of the importance of this resource, as stated many times by the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers, a federal-provincial body representing all provincial governments across Canada as well as the federal government, and in view of the serious consequences of this totally irresponsible action, will the minister responsible immediately consult with industry and labour representatives and together with them work to persuade—to persuade, not to force—the provincial government of British Columbia to reverse this idiotic and self-destructive course?

Mr. Simmons: Madam Speaker, what the hon. member is getting exercised about is the decision or determination by the B.C. government to allow some of its Crown land to be used for agricultural purposes. I do not know what he has against agriculture. We on this side do not have anything against the subject.

Mr. Nielsen: Nothing for it either.

Mr. Simmons: We also see this decision of the government of B.C. as a decision which is strictly within provincial jurisdiction. We have no intention of interfering with it. I suggest to the hon. member that his question ought to be more properly directed to the appropriate minister in the government of British Columbia.

Mr. Clark: Or perhaps to Westminster.

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THE BUDGET**INQUIRY WHETHER ECONOMIC FORECAST WILL BE TABLED**

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The Prime Minister took a vow of silence yesterday, and he would not answer me, so I have a question for the minister. The Prime Minister, of course, is a bit afraid.

Last year the government of the day introduced for the first time a five-year forecast in connection with the budget entitled "Economic Assumptions Underlying the Fiscal Projections of the Budget". In addition, just before the budget was brought down we tabled a tax expenditure account. Other information was also tabled, such as the explanation of the new expenditure-management system. The minister does not have such a system so I do not expect him to table it.

Does the minister intend to table a five-year economic forecast with his budget to follow the precedent set last year; and will he be tabling an annual tax expenditure budget and report that would show tax revenues forgone and which will bring up-to-date and refine the one published last year, as that report admitted that it was not entirely refined? Will these things be done?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, as one who has always believed in open government—

An hon. Member: "Open government by closed mouth".

Mr. MacEachen: —I propose to table all the documents which became part of the budget picture last December. I would add, and I am sure that the hon. member will understand, that these projections and assumptions are just that and, as I learned and as he learned, some of the projections which he made last December did not last very long. Despite that disability, I still think that it is worth while to give the largest possible amount of information to the public, even though much of it is at risk.

Mr. Crosbie: Madam Speaker, I am very much encouraged by what the minister has said because it shows that perhaps he is still ready to learn and to follow good practices. I would also like to ask the minister whether or not he will be dealing with the question of sunset provisions of tax measures. We had promised last year a review to determine whether or not it would be rational to have sunset provisions attached to certain tax measures.

Also, will the minister follow our example by referring the question of tax treatment of charitable donations and the question of capital gains taxes to a parliamentary committee as we intended to do? These are very involved questions. Will he follow our example in these areas as well?

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, in the statement which I made in April I indicated that I would be tabling a paper on capital gains. I will be doing that, if not on the day or the day after the budget, then very shortly thereafter, so that the House will be able to base a consideration of capital gains on an analysis which has been prepared within the Department of Finance. This document will be made available to the House as early as possible after the budget.

Obviously, some of the proposals will have sunset clauses, but I want to make sure that the sun does not set on me as it set on the hon. member.

Mr. Crosbie: It will rise again.