

AGREEMENT INQUIRY

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, given the fact that staff associations as late as yesterday said on radio—and I quote Mr. Donegani, President of the PIPS group—“since we have yet to have hard input from him”, the Minister, “it must mean that he has agreed with our positions, and we are happy to hear that”, could the Minister confirm that the President of the Treasury Board, on the matters which I mentioned in my previous question, has agreed with the staff associations? Will he announce today when we can expect a signed agreement on these six issues?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I want to underline the very good tone which these discussions are taking between the President of the Treasury Board and the various unions. The President is hopeful that these discussions will be resolved shortly and that there will be a positive response. However, I do not think it is helpful for me or for the Hon. Member to try to draw these discussions on to the floor of the House of Commons at a point when they are at a sensitive stage and are clearly resulting in an improvement in the tone of labour-management relations.

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FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS

CREATION OF JOBS IN MANITOBA

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my question is on the only issue which really matters today, that is, the unemployment rate that exists in the country, and is directed to the Minister of Finance. The one province which is showing that Governments can make a difference in creating jobs is the Province of Manitoba. When will the Minister of Finance keep the election promise of the Government and provide a change in the equalization formula so that Manitoba gets the money it needs to provide more jobs for Manitobans?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the Hon. Member is aware, I have had a number of discussions with the Minister of Finance from the Province of Manitoba. He was in Ottawa, I believe a week ago, with other representatives from various organizations in Manitoba, discussing the issue. I set out some of the considerations which had to be taken into account there. I indicated that it wasn't just a one-province issue, that a number of provinces are affected by the issue. It isn't an easy one to resolve because of the large amount of moneys which are involved and the fact that we have a very high deficit with which we have to deal on an ongoing basis. I indicated to him—and I will indicate it to the House—that we are close to reaching a decision on this. I will be communicating this both to the House and to that Minister of Finance in due course.

Oral Questions
FUNDING FOR QUEBEC

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his answer. I am sure we are all awaiting that announcement. Because jobs are so important and we must have action by Governments now, could the Minister tell us that they will be acting on the promise of the Prime Minister in Quebec during the election campaign, and that they will increase the money going to provinces like Quebec through the equalization formula? That was an election promise. It will create jobs. Are they going to act on it?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we have set out very clearly the broad program we are following to create employment opportunities. As I have said on many occasions, that has been very well received by people right across the country, including people in the Province of Quebec and in the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Murphy: The Province of Manitoba—

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I would suggest to the Hon. Member, first of all, that he listen to the answer before he asks another question. I also suggest that he exercise a degree of restraint in his criticism and watch for the results. I can assure him that the results of the program which we have set out will be far in excess of anything he has seen before.

Mr. Murphy: That is what scares us.

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TRANSPORT

AUTOMOBILE EMISSION CONTROLS

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Right Hon. Prime Minister I should like to direct a question to the Minister of State for Transport. It has to do with the upcoming scheduled meeting between the Prime Minister and President Reagan in March, when the issue of acid rain will be tackled and where the Prime Minister will need every bit of help he can get from his two Ministers of Transport, having given away Canada's bargaining position in a manner whereby, even if Canada were to close down its emissions tomorrow, it would still suffer considerably from the 26 million tonnes of SO₂ emissions coming from the United States. Now—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The next sentence.

Mr. Caccia:—the Minister of State for Transport is aware that there is a squabble going on right now in Ottawa between his Department, on the one hand, and the Department of the Environment and the Department of National Health and Welfare, on the other hand, over the date of the introduction of these controls.

I am asking the Minister of State for Transport whether he could assure the House that he will make an announcement for