

Oral Questions

minister. Meanwhile the Minister of Finance is wasting public funds on a video which shows nothing of the economic mess his policies helped create.

Again I ask the Minister of Finance when will he recall that video and come up with a policy designed to pull Canadians out of the recession?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to withdraw the video because the video is responding to the concerns and questions of many people in the country. I will send the hon. member a video later this afternoon, if he wishes. I will send one to my colleague, the Leader of the New Democratic Party. It is important for all members of Parliament to learn what is happening.

The title of the video is *Where Do Your Tax Dollars Go?* I think there are a lot of Canadians who are asking that question. They have seen increases in taxation, which my hon. friend has commented on on a number of occasions. It is important to know what those tax dollars are spent on, the impact of the debt that we inherited in 1984 on the spending of the government, and the impact of the compound interest which we inherited in 1984. That compound interest, by the way, represents 80 per cent of the accumulation of debt that we have seen since 1984.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition should understand that it was the government that he was associated with which laid the groundwork for the high interest rates that we are facing.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs. On September 25, the Prime Minister spoke of his commitment to accelerating the specific land claims process. The aboriginal peoples of the Atlantic provinces have yet to be convinced of this commitment.

The maritime chiefs are meeting in Moncton, New Brunswick this week, including the chief from the Woodstock Band whose specific claim was validated by the government six years ago with no progress to date.

How does the minister intend to accelerate the specific claims process in the Atlantic regions of Canada?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, consistent with the Prime Minister's commitment, we have been holding meetings with various groups with a view to expediting the settlement of treaty deficiencies and the comprehensive claims. Such was the discussion in which the Prime Minister participated yesterday in Vancouver. It was a very successful meeting with the combined leadership of all of the native leadership of British Columbia.

Two weeks ago in this city, with members of Atlantic chiefs present, a process was undertaken with a view to improving the processing of specific claims. The government will certainly be bringing forward a major initiative in that respect, hopefully before the end of this year.

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same minister.

In excess of 500 specific claims remain unsettled to this day in Canada. In New Brunswick alone over 68 claims remain outstanding. A year and a half ago the government refused a proposal for funding for land claims from the Union of New Brunswick Indians and has not responded to a re-application for funding submitted one year ago.

Is this what the Prime Minister means by acceleration, a system that cannot provide a response to a serious request and a Conservative member of Parliament who refuses to meet with the chief of that reserve?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I would urge the hon. member to show as much confidence in our ability to deal with these issues as the native leadership of Canada has done. They are participating in important meetings and have promised me a report within 30 days on the process which will be required to improve our ability to dispose of specific claims quickly.

I myself have met with the chief of the Woodstock band to get on with the process that the Liberal government was unable to complete over many years when the party of which she is a member was in office.