

*Oral Questions*

minister is aware that there is approximately a \$3 spread between the asking price of the Wheat Board and the initial price. Can the minister assure western grain producers that the Canadian Wheat Board is in fact selling grain at or near the asking price and, if this is so, why is there a reluctance to increase the initial price?

**Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport):** Madam Speaker, yesterday I tried to explain that there is a time lapse between the rise in the price of grain internationally—and about which we are very pleased indeed—and the actual effect of this increase on the accounts of the Canadian Wheat Board. The Minister of State keeps reviewing these things constantly and it is believed that, with the final payments which are due in January next, there will be ample opportunity to make the necessary adjustment in an orderly way.

## INITIAL PRICE—REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

**Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw):** Madam Speaker, that certainly does not help the western grain producer.

**Mr. Pepin:** It is money in the bank.

**Mr. Neil:** Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Agriculture. I think he was in the House yesterday and would have heard the exchange of questions on this subject. In view of the fact that the western grain producers have commitments to meet in the way of payments on land, equipment and other operating expenses, and are also faced with very high interest rates, will the minister make representations to the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board and ask him to reconsider his decision not to raise the initial price?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of Transport and the minister in charge of the Wheat Board and I have constant discussions about the problems we face. We will be discussing these matters, and as the Minister of Transport has stated, they will be considered at the proper time.

\* \* \*

## NORTHERN AFFAIRS

## ASSISTANCE TO RESIDENTS TO MEET INCREASED COSTS

**Mr. Peter Ittinuar (Nunatsiq):** Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Finance I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Before the budget was introduced the Minister of Finance indicated that the government would help those who needed it most. Northern residents are paying four times as much for food as Canadians in the south. For example, a litre of not very fresh milk in Pond Inlet costs \$3.60. This is in a part of the country where liquor is the only government subsidized consumer item!

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**Mr. Ittinuar:** What specific plans does the government have to help residents of northern Canada cope with the highest cost of living in the country?

**Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Madam Speaker, as the hon. member may be aware, we adopted a policy that would further extend the moratorium on the taxation of northern benefits for a period of one year. This was at the request of many people in the north. In addition to that, my colleagues, the Minister of National Revenue, the Minister of Finance and I indicated that we would use the period while the moratorium is in effect to try to work out other policies to alleviate high costs in the north. That study will go on while the moratorium is in existence, and I hope it will give some considerable relief.

There have been other benefits of a nature that I think the hon. member might be aware of in terms of fuel costs as a result of previous government policies.

\* \* \*

## ENERGY

## COST OF OIL FOR NORTHERN RESIDENTS

**Mr. Peter Ittinuar (Nunatsiq):** Madam Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. There is nothing new in what the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has said. The only tax breaks for people in the north are those given to multinational corporations and not to northern residents.

**Mr. Munro (Hamilton East):** No.

**Mr. Ittinuar:** For instance, in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, and in fact in the northern parts of most provinces, oil costs over \$2 per gallon. In these areas oil is used to generate electricity. Can the minister explain why oil prices are being cushioned in the Atlantic provinces while residents of northern Canada are left to fend for themselves?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member is misinformed about the situation. The cushioning that is taking place in eastern Canada is exactly the same as that which takes place in the north. The basic price for oil across this country is the same, but obviously there are additional costs related to transportation and expenses of that kind. There is no special program for eastern Canada or one that does not apply equally to residents of the north.

I should also like to inform the hon. member that under the national energy program, which I hope he will support, we have provided for special measures to help the people of the north in terms of insulation programs and conservation. I have already announced that there will be special community projects through which will be developed high energy-efficient houses in the north.