

Oral Questions

Mr. Rompkey: Fishermen had encountered some difficulties, Madam Speaker, as a result of income tax not being deducted at source. To offset that, it was felt much better to pay on a regular basis, so that a great amount of income tax would not accumulate. Indeed, that meant putting fishermen on the same basis as everybody else in the country. I met with fishermen as recently as this past week in my own constituency and they are perfectly happy with the measure.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rompkey: All the members from the fishing constituencies can be heard, Madam Speaker. If the hon. member has something to say, the time to do it is when the legislation comes before the House.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER DISCUSS POLICY WITH MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. Mel Gass (Malpeque): Madam Speaker, we were advised by the fishermen that that is exactly what the minister would tell us, that they said they were in favour of it. I am sure there is not one fisherman in P.E.I. that is in favour of mandatory income tax deductions at source. Not one. Will the minister assure this House that he will discuss this policy with the Minister of Finance and see that some changes are made, so that it will not be deducted at source on a mandatory basis?

Mr. Nielsen: Write him a letter.

Mr. Gass: There may be some fishermen who said they would volunteer, but they are against the mandatory policy that this government is trying to force down their throats.

Hon. William Rompkey (Minister of National Revenue): Madam Speaker, I have to say again that all across the country people have their income tax deducted at source. That is all across the country.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rompkey: As I said before, it seems to me that doing it on a regular basis is much preferable to having taxes accumulate. If the hon. member has points to make to the contrary, he will have a chance to do that before the House.

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NEGOTIATION OF NEW NORTHLANDS AGREEMENT WITH MANITOBA

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. As the minister knows, there have been a number of attempts to negotiate a new Northlands Agreement. The last agreement, which lasted for five years, was worth \$155 million to the people of northern Manitoba. I understand the minister has agreed to meet with the provincial minister of northern affairs, Mr. Jay Cowan, at three o'clock today. Would the minister guarantee that there will be a new agreement, and

would he also guarantee that that agreement will provide at least as much money as the previous agreement did?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, as I said in Winnipeg when I met there with Mr. Cowan, the provincial minister, some weeks ago, my objective was to have concluded negotiations in a successful way that would lead to both of us being able to recommend to our respective cabinets a new Northlands Agreement which could carry on the very good work of the existing agreement which has very substantial federal participation. I think there has been considerable progress made in the negotiations for a new Northlands Agreement. With the very active support and assistance of my colleagues, the Minister for Employment and Immigration and the hon. member for St. Boniface, I look forward to further progress being made on this before too long. I also look forward to a brief meeting this afternoon with the Manitoba minister, in the company of my colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

QUERY WHETHER ARDA AGREEMENT WILL BE RENEWED

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, I am glad that the minister has in fact agreed to have a meeting. Lest the minister should feel he has been acting with some haste in this matter, I would remind him that the last agreement expired one year ago and that there has not been an agreement for the last year except the interim agreement, which has provided only a small amount of money for people in the north.

My supplementary question, Madam Speaker, is with regard to the special ARDA agreement which is also between the province of Manitoba and the federal government. I would like the minister to guarantee that the agreement will be again renewed for a full five-year period at this point, after the Manitoba government has already agreed to a five-year extension, based on the negotiations between the province and the federal government, and that at this late date the federal government is not going to change the ground rules and try for a shorter time for a further agreement.

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, I am glad my hon. friend has confirmed that although the initial Northlands Agreements' term formally ended only a year ago the federal government agreed to make an extension for a year, which has enabled us to carry on discussions which I hope will result in a satisfactory conclusion before too long.

With respect to the matter of special ARDA, this is a federal initiative covering all the western provinces as well as the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. I am discussing with my cabinet colleagues the future of this agreement. I look forward to being able to make some positive statement in that regard before too long.