

Oral Questions

• (1430)

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, it is fair to say that obviously I agree with the quote the Hon. Member has just given us, and I took good note of it last week when it was given by Commissioner Yalden. That notwithstanding, this budget has increased 30 times since its inception. We are now giving an average of \$9,000 per year per student.

If I can sit with the leaders and the students, obtain the appropriate data, as they are reasonable and I am reasonable, I will be asking for more if the need increases over the years.

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ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**FUNDING PROGRAM FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION—REQUEST FOR NEW DEADLINE**

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Over the last few weeks in the House we have repeatedly heard the Minister tell us that he has met with the chiefs and the leaders of the native peoples. He has stated that he has listened, but obviously he has not. If the Minister had been out there today, as I was, to listen to the leaders of the native people, he would have found out that those individuals are not pleased with his policy.

Based on that fact, would the Minister today, instead of saying he is meeting and not listening, change the deadline to April 1, 1990, in order to give the First Nations the time needed to collect data and develop a policy which will be of benefit to the native peoples and to the Government.

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, since I have been in all those meetings, I can assure my hon. friend that I have been listening very carefully. If the Hon. Member had been listening very carefully, he would know that, on average, we are giving out \$9,000 per year per person in total grants in this particular program today.

As I have indicated, there has been a consultation program from July until December. We still have five months until September 1 in order to review the policy as it is. I am prepared to do that. I am prepared to listen, and I was prepared to listen yesterday when the natives walked out on me during that meeting.

EFFECT ON WELFARE ROLLS

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Based on the fact that \$316 million were spent last year on welfare for native peoples, and because of this new policy, the estimate is that that will go up to \$400 million in the upcoming year, as a result of this policy, can the Minister tell us how many more native people will be unemployed, how many more of them will turn to drugs and alcohol abuse, and how much will this affect the deficit in the years to come?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, this policy has gone from \$4.2 million to \$130 million over the years. I think that is an indication that certainly this Government in particular believes in post-secondary education.

We also believe in graduating from post-secondary education, and fulfilling the goals of the First Nations, which is self-government and self-sufficiency.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**CHANGES IN PROGRAM—SHIFT TO WELFARE ROLLS**

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Last week the Minister of Employment announced that she will take \$800 million out of the Unemployment Insurance Fund, and thereby reduce the coverage for unemployed workers with that unemployment insurance program.

Over the weekend, Conservative Premier Buchanan of Nova Scotia said that such a move by the federal Government would simply shift the burden for unemployed workers from the unemployment insurance program to provincial welfare rolls, a consequence which most provinces cannot afford.

When does the Prime Minister intend to meet with the provincial premiers with respect to this matter? Will he be ready to offer them additional moneys to take care of the additional unemployed who will have to be taken of under welfare programs?