

*Oral Questions*

budgetary provisions. The original proposal involved some 163 technical amendments to the Income Tax Act.

What does the minister propose to do to end this continuing uncertainty and confusion? Is the minister planning further changes? Is he planning to proceed with the implementation of the budget as is? If so, can the minister indicate when the necessary legislation will be introduced in the House? Or will the minister show some courage and common sense, withdraw the budget, and bring in a new economic program so that we can get the country working again?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, one would need to be participating in the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne in order to cover the waterfront which has been laid out by the hon. member in his question. Just let me deal with one point in the hon. member's question. With respect to the decision to delay the implementation date for the manufacturers' sales tax, that suggestion was made weeks ago by the hon. member for Edmonton West. It has subsequently been made by various business groups who wanted to have more time to examine this major change.

**Mr. Clark:** Why did you put it in there in the first place?

**Mr. MacEachen:** It seems reasonable to me that one ought to accommodate that type of reasonable request.

**Mr. Huntington:** Why was it in there?

**Mr. Wilson:** Just another blunder.

**Mr. MacEachen:** I would expect that the hon. member should give some marks for the willingness to take into account representations received from some hon. members and from the business community.

**Mr. Nielsen:** Why did you put it in there in the first place?

REQUEST FOR MEASURES TO ASSIST OIL AND AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville):** Madam Speaker, that in no way alleviates the confusion and uncertainty. That change, as well as the 30 or 40 other changes which the minister has proposed, simply adds to the confusion and uncertainty. Added to that, the combined effects of the minister's budget and the National Energy Program are crippling the agricultural and energy industries, particularly in western Canada. Oil production in the west is shut in. In the meantime Canada is importing some 500,000 barrels of oil a day, causing layoffs, bankruptcies, and further aggravating our balance of payments. In the agricultural area, the huge increases in the price of fuel and fertilizer caused by the National Energy Program and the minister's budget are crippling that industry.

What positive measures is the minister proposing to take to alleviate these difficulties and to get these two major and very important industries in Canada working again? Will the minister take some positive steps now or in the next few weeks

to alleviate the hardships imposed upon those two very important sectors?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member again has covered the waterfront in his question. Let me just take one point and remind him that it is rather common for hon. members in the House to attribute difficulties that are being faced in the oil industry, for example, and the energy industry, either to the National Energy Program or to the budget provisions. He might look around the world, into the United States, for example, and ask how—

• (1420)

**Mr. Clark:** That is where all the rigs are.

**Mr. MacEachen:** —the Canadian budget could possibly affect conditions there. Canadian rigs, having gone down there, so it is alleged by hon. members opposite, do not find the amount of work they expected in the United States. Hon. members ought to realize that there are more things at play at the present time in the energy industry, including a rapid fall in world demand for the product, and falling world prices. It seems to me that these are the underlying factors which are influencing the situation, not the National Energy Program.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville):** Madam Speaker, it is rather strange that the minister is so short of answers today. During the election campaign of 1979-80, he and his Prime Minister said that they would manage the economy in such a way that interest rates would come down, because the economy would be administered in a sound manner. Where are all the answers now? They had the answers then, but he has not been able to answer one question which I have put to him. I have asked him to bring forth some explanation to alleviate the uncertainty and confusion.

Since increased consumer spending is the key to economic recovery, and since the Conference Board of Canada indicated that consumer confidence in Canada is "incredibly bad", what specific measures will the minister take to restore consumer confidence, something which his current policies have in fact destroyed?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, in the last few weeks I have been consulting with a wide variety of private sector organizations. I have not found a single representative of these organizations who did not support the notion that the main cause of uncertainty in the country at the present time, including—

**Mr. Nielsen:** Is the government—