

*Inquiries of the Ministry***HIGHWAYS****ATLANTIC PROVINCES—COST-SHARING
FORMULA**

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, and I gave him notice of it a few days ago. Can the hon. gentleman advise what the proposed formula is for cost-sharing on highway programs with the Atlantic provinces?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me this question is of a very general nature. I think it could very well be placed on the Order Paper or debated at the time of adjournment.

Mr. McCleave: Ten o'clock.

NORTHERN AFFAIRS**POSSIBLE UPSETTING OF ECOLOGICAL
BALANCE BY PIPELINE**

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In light of the recent announcement by Mackenzie Valley Research Limited that it is carrying on work to determine whether a pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to Edmonton is economically feasible, is the minister taking steps to ensure that the over-all ecological balance of the north is not sacrificed in this type of commercial development?

While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether on a question of privilege I could compliment the Prime Minister and most of the senior ministers who are present on their good taste in the colour of their ties today.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

CONSUMER AFFAIRS**INCREASED OIL PRICES—EFFECT ON FARMERS**

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. On November 17 I asked him if he would have the price increases for fuel oil in western Canada investigated, and in his reply he said that all the companies had not yet implemented price increases. In view of the fact that as of this date virtually all of the oil companies have increased prices, would he have the effects of this action on farm production costs investigated?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday and Thursday of last week I asked the chief executives of Gulf and Imperial Oil to defer price increases. The announcements made since then indicate that they are not prepared to go along with such requests. As the hon. member knows, there is no power within the federal government to control these prices.

Mr. Gleave: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister would reconsider the question I asked him. I asked him whether he would have the results of these increases on farm costs and on the farming community investigated?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister indicated in the House the other day, we are anxious to establish general policies. We have been following general policies to contain inflation. The Minister of Finance will pursue those policies and persist in those policies. As the Prime Minister indicated the other day, it might not serve such a useful purpose to examine every price increase made.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that these increases, which have taken place almost simultaneously, cannot have been the result of coincidence and have all the appearance of a general agreement to mulct the Canadian public, what is the government going to do about prosecution under the Combines Investigation Act to put an end to this continual raising of prices and its unfairness to the Canadian People?

Mr. Basford: Well, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the right hon. gentleman's comment that these seem to be unfair price increases, particularly in view of the fact that they were asked not to make them—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nesbitt: That is a non sequitur.

Mr. Basford: The right hon. gentleman, having been Prime Minister of this country, knows that the Director of Research and Investigation under the Combines Investigation Act watches all significant price movements, and if there is evidence of breaching of the act he can be expected to act.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What is the position—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar on a point of order.