

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

INCOME TAX

COLLECTION OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TAX BEFORE APPROVAL

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance whether, in view of the expressed determination of the President of the United States to reduce the burden of taxation on the lower income groups in his country, the minister is reconsidering his unfortunate proposal to increase the burden on the same groups in this country; and in particular, is this perhaps the reason for the delay in his bringing forward the legislation to implement the so-called social development tax?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I believe the Leader of the Opposition is talking about the tax reform proposals in the United States being put forward by the President. As the house knows, our tax reform proposals will be presented in the form of a white paper, hopefully by the end of June. With respect to the tax measures contained in the budget, I am hoping to introduce the bill on Tuesday next.

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

EFFECT OF CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS ON COST OF LIVING

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that yesterday the Minister of Finance indirectly received honourable mention in the resignation statement of his colleague, the Minister of Transport, when he referred to the delay in dealing with inflation, is it the position of the government of Canada that constitutional problems are responsible for the continuing increase in the cost of living in this country?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would not think the question is in order.

HOUSING

REMOVAL OF TAX ON BUILDING MATERIALS

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Is the minister now giving consideration to removing the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Not at the present time, Mr. Speaker.

Inquiries of the Ministry

INDIAN AFFAIRS

CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE—DISCUSSIONS AS TO CLAIMS COMMISSION, WESTERN REPRESENTATION AND LEGALITY OF TREATIES

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. In view of the fact that the Indian consultative conference is to begin Monday next, and to be continued until May 5, is it the intention of the minister to divulge to that conference the terms that will be included in any legislation dealing with the establishment of an Indian claims commission, in order that the native Indians who are attending the conference may have an opportunity of discussing this matter?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I have no intention of limiting the discussion on any subject with the Indians next week. They themselves took the initiative of preparing the agenda, and if they wish to put before me their opinions about the Indian Claims Commission, I will readily listen to them. But I do not intend to disclose the government's policy in that field, as all its aspects will be known in the weeks following the last conference with the Indians.

[*English*]

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since the minister is not going to divulge to the Indian consultative conference the terms and conditions of any bill to establish an Indian claims commission, when is it the ministers' intention to give that information to the House of Commons, and when does he propose to introduce the legislation? Will it be this session?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I propose to inform the house before the adjournment in June on all aspects of our Indian policy, including the government's attitude regarding the Indian Claims Commission.

[*English*]

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister heard from representatives of the western delegates attending the conference to the effect that they will not be joining