

being given at all at the present time to the kinds of figures to which he has referred.

As far as Nova is concerned, we have never pretended that the elements of the National Energy Program were the be all and end all of everything. We have already agreed to make some changes to improve the program, which have been well received and have proven to be quite helpful to the industry.

I hope that in the discussions we are undertaking with the producing provinces we will arrive at a satisfactory arrangement. But I want to assure the hon. member that we will not expose Canadians to the type of action, the terrible treatment that the minister of finance on his side imposed on them in December of 1979.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PUBLIC SERVICE

POLICY GOVERNING STAFFING PRACTICES OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Prince Edward-Hastings): Madam Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Last week, when faced with a report of selective hiring from Quebec only, the Minister of Transport expressed shock. The Public Service Commission now says that it is government policy to limit employee searches in all provinces. Would the President of the Treasury Board like to take his turn at expressing shock? More particularly, since it is his responsibility, would he attempt to change this policy so that all Canadians are given an equal opportunity to apply for jobs in Canada with the Canadian government?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Siddon: So much for mobility!

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I have been reading the statements from the Public Service Commission. I believe the hon. member is aware that staffing is the prerogative of the Public Service Commission, not the Treasury Board.

Mr. Ellis: Madam Speaker, it may be the prerogative of the Public Service Commission, but surely the President of the Treasury Board has some input into this policy. We find that in response to ads for a position in Annapolis Valley-Hants in Nova Scotia, the hiring is done in Moncton, New Brunswick. So much for the policy. It seems to me that the policy only applies to those areas where the right colour of representative sits. Therefore, could the minister apply some pressure to the Public Service Commission and have that policy changed?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, the whole purpose of the Public Service Commission having staffing responsibilities is to avoid the application of pressure. It is to ensure that the merit

principle is respected. As a result of that we have one of the finest public services in the world.

The issue is, though, that this is a policy. My colleague, the Minister of Transport, has commented upon it. I myself have looked at it and I would certainly be prepared to discuss it with the Public Service Commission. But I am in no position, nor do I want to be in a position, to put pressure on the Public Service Commission with respect to their staffing policies, which is their prerogative.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT'S TREATMENT OF MANITOBA INDIAN BANDS

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg-St. James): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The Manitoba Indian chiefs feel very strongly that the Department of Indian Affairs in Manitoba has been unable to respond to the needs of Indian people and is, in fact, working from the basis of arbitrary budgetary allocations. It has proceeded to impose budgets on Indian bands rather than negotiate budgets. Officials have not taken any action on the needs of off-reserve Indians, ignoring a very real and growing problem. I would observe that this is due at least in part to the limited funds available for Indians. Is the minister taking any action to obtain additional funds for Indians so that his meeting tomorrow with the Manitoba Indian chiefs will have some hope of success?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, my colleagues and myself are always looking for additional resources for the Indian people, since everyone in this House knows about the poverty situation which confronts many elements of the native people. I hope that there will be additional funding to alleviate some of these concerns in the relatively near future.

In the meantime some of the specific matters that the hon. member is talking about have been addressed through meetings which have been held by the Manitoba Indians with my deputy, my executive assistant, and so on. I have been informed that some of these matters have been resolved satisfactorily. Whatever ones have not been resolved, I will endeavour to resolve myself tomorrow.

Mr. Keeper: Madam Speaker, the minister seems to be unaware of the complete breakdown in the working relationship between the Indians in Manitoba and his department, to the point at which they are calling for the resignation of the whole executive of that department.

The minister should understand that since 1970 allocations for Indians per capita have increased by 14 per cent, whereas general allocations across the budget have increased some 128 per cent. It is time to remove fiscal restraints from the budget for Indian people. Will the minister take some action on that immediately?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!