

Oral Questions

Given that the Port of Churchill will be standing idle for another year because of Canadian Wheat Board decisions, will the Minister tell us what, if anything, his Department of Western Economic Diversification will be doing to revitalize the economy of this port? Have any economic impact studies been done? What is being done to help tourism? Will the suggestion to use the port for humanitarian food aid exports be taken up? Will the Minister act now to save Canada's only Arctic port?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Grains and Oilseeds)): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should know that we have been in conversation with the Government of the Province of Manitoba discussing many of the issues including tourism. There are some things that we can look at for Churchill. However, in terms of the port, the Hon. Member should know that there is a very limited time in which Churchill operates. The Port of Churchill normally opens about the second week in August and runs to about the second week or the middle of November. It is very difficult in terms of selling grain to some countries to say them: "Look, we want you to wait until September or October to buy grain through Churchill". Our customers may very well decide to go elsewhere.

We are aware of the concern. We are working with the provincial Governments to see what we can do on behalf of Churchill. In fact, the Minister of Transport and myself will be meeting this afternoon with a group of people from Churchill to look at what can be done for Churchill.

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TOURISM**RENEWAL OF SUB-AGREEMENTS WITH THE PROVINCES**

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Tourism. The Minister recently acknowledged, during committee hearings, that the tourism industry sub-agreements with the provinces would not be renewed. Would the Minister advise the House whether he has in fact consulted with the tourism industry before cutting them off at the knees?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, we certainly have not cut the tourism industry off at the knees. There will be various programs of economic co-operation with the provinces through the regional agencies. We have other agreements yet to expire. In fact, the industry itself is looking forward to co-operating with us on marketing and advertising. We will do this. We are looking forward to increasing the yield of the Canadian tourist industry next year as a result of this co-operation.

FUNDING OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE YUKON TERRITORIES

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, representatives of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada in fact indicate that no consultations have taken place. The Minister also indicated that federal tourism funding will now be funnelled through regional agencies, such as ACOA and Western Diversification.

I wonder if the Minister would explain how he intends to finance tourism development in the Yukon Territories, whose agreement has now expired, when in fact the Yukon Territories cannot access the funds in these regional programs, such as Western Diversification.

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Small Businesses and Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, with the Yukon, that is a separate conversation and separate agreement which can be discussed in the future. I would remind the Hon. Member and the NDP in particular that the success of the tourism industry in Canada today is not just because of Government contributions. It is the strength of the private sector and strength of the industry on its own two feet together with the marketing help of the federal Government.

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THE BUDGET**IMPOSITION OF GOODS AND SERVICE TAX—EFFECT ON BUILDERS AND HOME BUYERS**

Mr. Joe Fontana (London East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The Government's Budget has imposed some of the most brutal, callous and regressive taxes upon Canadians, including a goods and services tax which even will tax the homes that Canadians want to buy.