

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Can the Acting Prime Minister tell us how soon we can expect the results of this investigation?

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, I was talking to the chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission this morning and he is looking into the matter immediately.

INFLATION—OPINION OF PRICES AND INCOMES COMMISSION CHAIRMAN ON CERTAIN WAGE SETTLEMENTS

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Has-tings):** In his conversation with the chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission this morning did the Acting Prime Minister ask his opinion on these very large raises that have been put through during the weekend and what does the chairman say about them?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think the hon. gentleman could have been listening to my earlier answer.

**Mr. Hees:** Oh yes, he was. He didn't hear any answer.

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Young said it would be inappropriate to comment on the settlements until the commission has had time to examine the situation, and this advice I offer to my hon. friend.

POLLUTION

ATHABASCA RIVER—PROPOSED COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO OIL SPILL, CONTROL AND PREVENTION

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Minister for Indian Affairs and Northern Development in respect of a matter which I have already raised. In view of the fact that the oil spill in the Athabasca River is moving with tremendous rapidity hundreds of miles north through the Peace and Slave Rivers and threatening the water supply of Fort Smith, will the minister get in contact with the proper authorities in the province of Alberta to arrange for a commission of inquiry as to the nature of this spill, how it happened, whether proper steps were taken to control it and what can be done to prevent a repetition of this very dangerous form of pollution?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Mr. Speaker, the problem has been looked into by the officials of my department. As early as Saturday morning, I communicated with Mr. Ross, Minister of the Alberta Department of Lands and Forests, to seek the co-operation of his department, and we have set up a task force headed by Mr. Stephens of the Wildlife Service to study the problem. In addition, 23 officials of the Department of National Defence have been sent on the spot, not to mention officials of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. We have obtained the co-operation of the Alberta government and hope to repair the damage as soon as possible.

With regard to the possibility of preventing the recurrence of such incidents, of course the officials concerned have been asked to look fully into the cause of that pollution and to try to give the necessary instructions to prevent a recurrence.

[*English*]

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister mind explaining to the House and the country why, in as much as I raised this question two weeks ago and was told by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that the oil spill would be investigated and that experts would be sent there to find out the cause and to do something to prevent such spills, there has been two weeks' delay and nothing has been done to this date?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I must point out to the hon. member that the pipeline was damaged in Alberta, within the territory administered by the province. As soon as the oil reached the national park and I felt I was involved, I immediately dealt with this problem.

As far as the officials of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources are concerned, I cannot say what they did, but I shall inquire into the matter and report to the House.

[*English*]

**Mr. Woolliams:** Is it because the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has got himself into so much difficulty with the cabinet that there has been no conversation between that minister and—