

Oral Questions

Mr. Shields: Will the Minister be announcing the total, absolute and final removal of the Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax soon? And if not, why not?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the Deputy Prime Minister just said, we are very concerned about the implications of lower international energy prices in western Canada. This was the subject of the first trip by the new Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. He has had a number of discussions with other representatives of the industry. As soon as he has had a chance to canvass these views in full, we will be making some decisions known.

* * *

INDIAN AFFAIRS**DEPARTMENT'S FUTURE—GOVERNMENT POLICY**

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. In a CBC radio interview aired this morning, the new Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development said he has no plans and no intentions of working toward the winding down of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Why has the Government decided to abandon the policy of implementing Indian self government?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, in view of his question I think the Hon. Member should not draw some of the conclusions he has. He is well aware that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, now in his job for some weeks, has to be given the time to examine the Department. I think all of us recognize that.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Then he shouldn't talk.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): The objectives of the Government with respect to Indian Affairs have not been changed.

CONSULTATIONS WITH INDIAN LEADERS

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane—Superior): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is again directed to the Deputy Prime Minister, if I may. In that same CBC radio interview, the new Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development said he does not plan to do much travelling across Canada in connection with the responsibilities of his portfolio. Why has the Prime Minister permitted the new Minister to abandon a long-standing practice of actively consulting with Indian leaders? Does the Deputy Prime Minister really believe it is enough for the Minister to stay in Ottawa and consult with himself?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am really surprised that the Hon. Member, for whom I have a lot of respect, would make such a suggestion. I happen to have heard that clip from the program this morning. What I heard the

Minister say was that he did not plan to travel quite as much as the previous Minister.

* * *

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD**REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF CROP YEAR**

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board. The current crop year expires on July 31 and many farmers cannot fill their quota of grain deliveries because country elevators are congested. Will the Minister extend the crop year so farmers can sell this year's crop at this year's prices and not have to accept an up to 30 per cent reduction by being forced to accept next year's prices?

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member raises a very serious concern of many farmers in the prairie region. In the northern area of the prairies, especially, the harvest was difficult last fall and the resulting grade of grain is not of the top quality usually produced in Canada. I have raised this issue with the Board and have had conversations with the Hon. Member, as I have had with other Hon. Members on this side. The Hon. Member should know that the Board is doing everything possible to take delivery of the outstanding quotas which will be there at the end of the crop year, and hopefully by the end of the crop year everyone will have had a chance to deliver on the quotas which are presently in effect.

DELIVERY SYSTEM—EFFECT ON FARMERS

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Does the Minister not think it is unfair for anyone who does not have an opportunity to deliver his full quota to receive a lower price, when his neighbour 10 or 15 miles away can get the full price, just because the system has broken down and he has not been able to deliver his crop?

● (1440)

Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of State (Canadian Wheat Board)): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member did not hear my answer to his question. The Canadian Wheat Board has been able to take delivery of three million additional tonnes this year, which number was not in the system last year. That is about a 15 per cent increase. The information I have is that we will have the lowest on-farm carry-over ever, something in the order of one million tonnes or less. The Wheat Board has given the assurance that it will do everything it can to take delivery of the quotas which are in effect for the end of the crop year.

If the Hon. Member has some concerns in some specific areas I would be more than happy to take them up in order to do what we can to ensure that the situation to which the Hon.