

Inquiries of the Ministry

ter of Finance and the Acting Prime Minister whether they will not give earnest consideration to the policies now being pursued and whether they are prepared to sit by with the present policies and either push Canada into or allow Canada to enter a depression?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I do not think there is any danger of Canada entering a depression—

Mr. Crouse: We are already in it now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Benson:—and the government is continuously reviewing its fiscal and monetary policies.

Mr. Hees: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister not think that the country is entitled to something better than the same old broken record he has been playing for the last three or four years?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

SUPPLYING OF FOOD BY S.S. "MANHATTAN" TO POND INLET ESKIMOS

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development regarding a report today that the S.S. *Manhattan* supplied some 4,000 pounds of food to the Eskimo inhabitants of Pond Inlet in northern Canada. Although we are all grateful for the generosity of the crew of the S.S. *Manhattan*, may I ask the minister whether his department was aware of the deplorable conditions in that area and whether any assistance has been provided or is to be provided to the people of that community?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, personally I am not aware of the present situation at Pond Inlet. It is the first thing I have heard about a food problem at Pond Inlet.

I shall inquire immediately to determine whether there are really unfortunate conditions over there. We have a local administrator and if such a situation exists he should have reported it to the authorities concerned. Anyway, I myself shall be at Pond Inlet on Sunday and I shall make my own investigation on the spot.

[Mr. Stanfield.]

[English]

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Am I to take it from the minister's statement that this is the first he has heard of the conditions in that village? Are communications in the minister's department so deficient that ships passing by have to do the job which his department ought to be doing?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It seems to me that the second part of the hon. member's question is purely argumentative. Perhaps the minister might like to reply to the first part of the question.

Mr. Baldwin: The Minister of Finance is not aware of general conditions, either.

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: In answer to this question, Mr. Speaker, I can say that responsibilities having been transferred to the government of the Northwest Territories, such requests are usually sent directly to Yellowknife rather than to Ottawa. It was the desire of the House that responsibilities be transferred as quickly as possible to the government at Yellowknife. This probably explains why the news had not reached me. The request must have been made directly to the Commissioner in Yellowknife.

INDUSTRY

GOLD MINING—POSSIBLE REVISION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY—PURCHASE OF PRODUCTION BY BANK OF CANADA

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance.

Does the Canadian government intend to make an early revision of its policy concerning Canada's gold producers?

[English]

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if there is to be any revision we will announce it in the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: I would like to ask a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Could the minister tell the House whether the Bank of Canada is buying or is still prepared to buy the gold produced in Canada, at the free market price?

[English]

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I will look into this. I believe the gold production of Canada is bought at the standard price and sold abroad. I will check and report back.