

*Oral Questions*

## REQUEST FOR EARLY DECISION

**Hon. George Hees (Northumberland):** Madam Speaker, I know that the minister has been saying for quite some time that he is considering the matter and will make a statement soon. This has been going on and on. We wonder if he is trying to write a new meaning into the word eternity. I tell him that farmers all over the country are going out of business day by day. They cannot stand operating with all these very high interest rates. Would he give an answer on this most important matter no later than next week? Would he please assure the House that he will do that?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member has talked about eternity. He seems to have enjoyed a good deal of electoral eternity in the House of Commons.

There are real problems in extending the Small Business Development Bond to unincorporated businesses and farmers. It is not just through ill will or a refusal to consider the problem. It would include a large number of farmers. I am sure that if these proposals were sound on their face, they would have been adopted by the former minister of finance when he constructed the Small Business Development Bond and excluded the groups which the hon. member now recommends to me. Obviously there are good reasons for the decision taken then, which still prevail.

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## FISHERIES

## IMPACT OF INCREASE IN PRICE OF GASOLINE ON FISHERMEN

**Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore):** Madam Speaker, I also wish to address a question to the Minister of Finance. One year ago Canadian inshore fishermen in Atlantic Canada received 25 cents per pound for haddock and 22 cents per pound for codfish. Today they are offered 17 cents per pound for haddock and 16 cents per pound for cod. In view of the fact that the federal government, through taxes, has raised the price of gasoline by 60 cents per gallon within the past year, including the 9 cents yesterday, which is the highest single increase in any one day in the history of Canada, at a time when the price received by our primary producers has dropped by 33 per cent, what action is the minister planning to take, if any, to help the fishermen survive?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I must say that I find it interesting, if not curious, that hon. members from the opposition should get up and draw to our attention the increases in energy prices that have taken place. They have taken place, but what we have been telling the country, and what I repeat today, is that the energy price increases which have taken place under this government are considerably less than those—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Paproski:** The fishermen would have been exempt.

**Mr. MacEachen:**—than those that have taken place under the present government. I refer to the recent meeting of the Conservative party in February, and to their official resolution in which they said that the PC party believes that Canada should move quickly toward 75 per cent of the world price for oil and gas.

**Mr. Crosbie:** You are there now.

**Mr. MacEachen:** The world price for oil and gas now is \$43. Can you tell the fishermen how you would apply that, and meet the lesser prices which were announced and are in vogue at the present time? I categorize the opposition position as rather hypocritical. It will not fool the people of Canada.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Paproski:** Two decades of the rosary for that, Allan!

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

## REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

**Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore):** Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister. The inshore fishermen in some parts of Nova Scotia, for the information of the minister, have been tied up for the past two weeks simply because it is uneconomical for them to continue fishing, and now this government has rammed its knee in their necks with the twelfth consecutive raise in the price of gasoline since 1980.

Let me ask the minister if he would stop being righteously indignant. Instead I should like to know what action he is planning to take—

**Mr. Clark:** None.

**Mr. Crouse:**—to help fishermen lower fuel and operating costs at least to the level of his promises during the last campaign—

**Mr. Clark:** That is pretty low.

**Mr. Crouse:**—so that the fleets will no longer be tied up beyond the fortnight they have been at the docks already and can contemplate returning to sea, and so that the unemployed shore workers can contemplate returning to their employment?

**Mr. Paproski:** Exempt them, as we would.

**Mr. Crosbie:** That is what we did.

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member asks what we intend to do to help the inshore fishermen and all the consumers of energy in the country. My answer is the answer that was given yesterday—that we intend to pursue a policy that will be less burdensome, that will impose lesser price