

Petitions

when is the Minister going to start looking in the mirror and see that there are fair ways of dealing with people who need help in this economy?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should realize that we are trying to allocate funds, either in the form of direct support by the Government or as incentives to the private sector to create as many jobs as quickly as we can. Coming from the West as he does, I do not think my friend will conclude that closing down the oil and gas industry in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan is going to be of great support to the unemployed of the country. I would suggest to him that if we have an active and dynamic oil and gas industry it will have significant beneficial impact, not only in terms of job creation in the West but all over Canada. I am sure my friend, if he reflects upon it, will find that this is the case.

● (1500)

REQUEST THAT CONDITIONS BE ATTACHED TO TAX BREAKS

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, oil company profits went up 38 per cent this year to \$1.2 billion. The Minister wants to give them another half billion dollars in order to improve their cash flow. Their cash flow went up 16 per cent to \$3.8 billion in the first half of 1983.

The disgusting aspect of this is not that we are shutting it down; we are simply asking that he stop writing blank cheques and begin providing some conditions to any forfeiture to tax revenue, that they either be passed through to consumers or they make an investment in the area that will stimulate the economy, guarantee energy security, and provide some jobs for people in this country.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if the industry does not invest and does not spend, it will have higher profits and it will pay taxes. Those taxes will come back to the federal Government and provincial Governments. Those moneys will be used to help Canadian citizens all across the country, and particularly help the unemployed.

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PETITIONS

TABLING OF REPORTS OF CLERK OF PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petition presented by the Hon. Member for York-Scarborough (Mr. Cosgrove) on Friday, February 17, 1984, meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

The petition presented by the Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse) on Friday, February 17, 1984, does not meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

AGRICULTURE

BRITISH COLUMBIA APPLES

Mr. Vince Dantzer (Okanagan North): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member for Beauharnois-Salaberry (Mr. Laniel) perhaps unconsciously misled the House in his earlier submission. He indicated that apples grown in Ontario and Quebec are the best apples in Canada but that can only be true if British Columbia and the Okanagan are no longer in Canada. By last count they are still part of Canada. We all know that they have the best apples in the world.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. NIELSEN—REPORTED INVESTIGATION OF LEADER OF
OPPOSITION—RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. Speaker: I am now prepared to rule on the question of privilege raised by the Hon. Member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) on February 15.

Any attempt to intimidate a Member with a view to influencing his parliamentary conduct is a breach of privilege. It is a fundamental principle of parliamentary law. If a Member is subjected to threats and intimidation, he or she is clearly hindered in the fulfilment of the parliamentary duties for which he or she was elected.

The Hon. Member for Yukon in his lengthy presentation covered a great deal of ground in relation to this principle. One statement which he made at page 1418 of *Hansard*, with which the Chair fully agrees, was as follows:

For a breach of privilege to be established, it must be established that the Government attempted to intimidate or obstruct the Leader of the Opposition by threatening to release information about his conduct in his role as a private citizen.

He then went on to say, that “intimidation was the Government’s intention”. However, this statement reflects the Hon. Member’s own judgment and he presumably does not claim it as a proven fact. The Chair has to decide, on the basis of the facts presented, whether there is enough evidence to substantiate a prima facie basis to this assertion.

The presentation of the Hon. Member for Yukon creates certain difficulties for the Chair. On the one hand, he is raising a question of privilege on behalf of his colleague, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney). However, in elaborating the case, the Hon. Member for Yukon seemed to be complaining that all members of the Opposition were working under the shadow of threats and intimidation. He alleged that “Members of the House can no longer rise in the House to ask questions of the Ministry without fear of reprisals for their actions”. He referred to incidents not directly related to the question of privilege he was raising, such as an incident arising on January 24 involving the Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde). He claimed that the question of privilege arose out of the exchanges during the Question Period, although the presentation ranged beyond the principal issue which was raised during the Question Period, namely the