

Oral Questions

al company vary, but in effect what is now being passed through is the cost increase related to the very substantial increases that occurred as the result of the 70 per cent and 56 per cent increases.

Mr. Speaker: I shall recognize the hon. member for York South for another supplementary, followed by the hon. member for Témiscamingue.

Mr. Lewis: I should like to ask the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources whether he has examined the profits of the corporations concerned which increased between 40 per cent and 50 per cent during the first three quarters of 1973 over the same period in 1972 and whether, if he made such an examination, he asked the companies to absorb at least part of the increase in the price of crude oil before handing it on to the consumers of Canada?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The hon. gentleman will recall that the condition upon which we obtained the agreement for restraint in September was that identified international cost increases could be passed on. So we were carrying out our side of that particular undertaking.

[Translation]

POSSIBLE SALE OF OIL BY ARAB COUNTRIES TO PROVINCE OF QUEBEC—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

A few days ago an official of one Arab country whose name I have forgotten stated during a visit in Quebec that his country was ready to sell oil to Quebec after agreement with that province, but that it was not ready to negotiate with Ottawa. Is the minister aware of that visit in Quebec and would the federal government object if Quebec transacted with one of the Arab countries?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): We do not approve such an arrangement between an Arab government and the Quebec government. Quebec does not really enjoy an international status, but it is quite possible that agreements could be negotiated between Quebec and Arab companies.

I will point out to the Quebec companies that such an arrangement with Arab countries is perhaps not so effective, given the experience of the past days.

[English]

NAMES OF FOREIGN COMPANIES SUPPLYING OIL TO CANADA INTENDING TO USE "FORCE MAJEURE" CLAUSE IN CONTRACTS

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary follows the line taken by the Official Leader of the Opposition—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, following the questions by the Leader of the Official Opposition—

An hon. Member: Which one?

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain):—would the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources give parliament the name or names of the supplying companies that have threatened to apply *force majeure*?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would certainly have to check on that. I think that the suppliers of the Canadian companies are probably well known, for example, Creole in Venezuela and Aramco in Saudi Arabia.

ADVANCE DELIVERY TO PROVINCES OF STATEMENT MADE BY MINISTER

Mr. Joe Clark (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I have a new question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In light of the fact that for reasons best known to itself the government entrusted to the Department of External Affairs the advance delivery to the provinces of last night's energy statement, can the minister explain why advance copies of that statement were not received by several provinces, including New Brunswick and Manitoba?

An hon. Member: They are not recognized.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I doubt very much whether it is part of my responsibilities to deliver messages to the provinces of Canada.

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): Since this was the practice followed last night and it is apparently a new practice and therefore a new policy of the government of Canada, based on this precedent can the minister advise if the government, as a result of its various dealings with the provincial governments, now feels it is necessary to establish embassies in all the provinces?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

REASON FOR USE OF "FORCE MAJEURE" CLAUSE IN CONTRACTS BY FOREIGN COMPANIES SUPPLYING OIL TO CANADA

Mr. Peter C. Bawden (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Would the minister say whether the *force majeure* which is being suggested by the oil supplying companies is as a result of their being cut off at the source by the producing countries and therefore they do not have the oil, or is it because the supplying companies have decided arbitrarily to deliver that oil to some other country?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that it has been a decision of the supplying companies, and it may be related under the conditions of the contracts they have with other countries to other supply obligations.