

Oral Questions

possibly the Hon. Member might agree with me, are still confidential at this stage. Until that degree of confidentiality has been removed, I am not in a position to say anything more in the House than the Hon. Member.

REQUEST THAT CABINET MAKE DECISION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Finance and I preface it by saying that he is quite correct in pointing out the hypocrisy of the Liberal Party which gave away \$1 billion to Dome Petroleum without bringing it before Parliament at all.

Mr. Penner: Save your sermons for Sunday, Ed.

Mr. Broadbent: They are a little sensitive, Mr. Speaker.

On October 17 the Minister of Finance said in the House with reference to the Gulf Canada deal that this was discussed in Cabinet, "and discussed at some length because of the importance of that deal". If he said that with reference to the Gulf decision, will he assure us that this decision will be one that is made by the Cabinet as a whole because up to \$2.4 billion of taxpayers' money is involved and that after Cabinet reaches a decision, he will, unlike the Liberal Government, bring it before Parliament?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is jumping ahead of things. Two private sector companies are talking today. We have been told, and it is in the newspaper this morning, that two other companies might be possible contenders for this company. However, decisions have not been made by those companies.

We do not have a specific proposal with requests from either company or the other before us on which we can make decisions. Until that time, there is really nothing to talk about. A lot of hypothetical questions are floating around in the House, but until we receive specific requests we are not able to make any decisions.

REQUEST FOR GUARANTEE OF CANADIAN OWNERSHIP

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, we are looking for a specific commitment from the Government that it will bring the matter before the House.

There is a recent report in the *Financial Times* of London and, according to this news story, there has already been a deal negotiated to sell Dome to a foreign concern. Whether or not that report is true is beside the point I want to make in my question.

● (1430)

Will the Minister assure this House that the ownership of this important petroleum resource will remain in Canadian hands? In addition, because of the millions of dollars of

taxpayers' money involved, will he see that the decision is brought before the Parliament of Canada?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member says there is a report out there that says a deal has been made. I can assure him that as of 12.30 this afternoon a deal has not been made. In that sense all of the questions are hypothetical.

The Hon. Member says we should bring the deal before the House or before Cabinet. We do not know yet whether we have a deal. We do not know what the relationship of the Government of Canada might be to that deal.

The Hon. Member then goes on to say we must have a Canadian buyer and we have to make sure that no decisions be made relating to taxpayers' funds which confer a benefit here. The Hon. Member has to understand which way he is going on this. For that reason I think he should wait and be a bit more patient and understand what the circumstances are before he starts making all these requests.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, we know which way we are going but we are afraid the Government has put Canada up for sale. That is what we disagree with.

REQUEST THAT DECISION BE REFERRED TO PARLIAMENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, it is a perfectly straightforward question. Will the Minister assure this House that Dome will not be allowed to fall into foreign hands? Because about 20,000 jobs and \$2.4 billion of taxpayers' money are involved, will he also guarantee the elected representatives of the people of Canada, namely, this Parliament, that when the decision is made it will be brought before Parliament?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give him that assurance because I do not know what the deal might be.

Some Hon. Members: So what?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Hon. Members say "so what?"

Mr. Broadbent: When you make the deal come and tell us about it.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Possibly the Hon. Member should reflect on the fact that all we are talking about now is speculation. We do not know whether there will be a non-resident company negotiating a deal with Dome Petroleum. We do not know whether a tax concession will be requested. Until we know these things there is no point in making specific responses to hypothetical questions.