

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, as a first step, I would appreciate more support from the hon. member's party for the additional taxes I am placing on the oil and gas industry—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh!

**Mr. MacEachen:**—rather than constant attacks from them about what I am doing.

● (1430)

## DETERMINATION WITH RESPECT TO LAYING OF CHARGES

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Madam Speaker, perhaps I could put my question to the Minister of Justice, dealing with the petroleum inquiry which for the first time in more than ten years has now been referred to the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission. Would the Minister of Justice first indicate if the Department of Justice was consulted with respect to whether charges should be laid in connection with this matter; were outside counsel consulted; and if such was the case, was it determined by the Department of Justice that no formal prosecution should continue against the companies involved?

[Translation]

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development):** Madam Speaker, the Director General at the Department of Consumer Affairs decided yesterday to refer the whole file to the commission involved. There will be a quasi-judicial inquiry. As for the Department of Justice, it has been involved through legal advisers, and it finds the procedure recommended by the director quite acceptable.

[English]

## COURSE ADOPTED FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF INVESTIGATION

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel):** Madam Speaker, perhaps I could ask the minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs a twofold question, as the Minister of Justice did not answer my question. Was the minister advised directly by his director, or otherwise, by the Department of Justice, that criminal charges were not warranted in connection with the petroleum inquiry? Second, would he now inform the House—

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Stevens:**—of the outcome of the uranium inquiry, one concerning the apparent involvement of the government in price rigging itself?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General):** Perhaps it would be useful for me to remind the hon. member that the director of combines has three courses of action he may follow. One is to terminate an inquiry, report to the minister that he has terminated the inquiry, and cannot find reasons to pursue it. It is obvious that the director did not follow that course.

The second course of action is to refer his findings to the Department of Justice, and ask it to lay charges based on the evidence that he has gathered during the inquiry.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Was that done?

**Mr. Ouellet:** The director has not followed that course.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Why?

**Mr. Ouellet:** Instead, he decided to follow the third course of action which was open to him—

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** You have no evidence.

**Mr. Ouellet:**—and to refer his findings to the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission.

The director has three courses of action open to him, and it is in his discretion to decide which one of the three he follows. Under the law, he decided to follow the third one.

In relation to the second question of the hon. member regarding the uranium inquiry, this inquiry by the director is not completed. Obviously, when it has been completed, his findings will be made public.

## REASONS FOR ADOPTION OF THIRD OPTION IN CONNECTION WITH FUTURE PROCEEDINGS

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, the director reports to the minister. Can the minister tell us why the director chose that third course, and whether he will pass that information on to the House?

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General):** Yes, I will take the request of the Leader of the Opposition under advisement. I will talk to the director and ask him why he preferred the third option, and not the second.

**Some hon. Members:** You don't know?

**Mr. Clark:** Would the minister tell the House whether there was any consultation between the director and the minister or any of his colleagues in cabinet, or parliamentary secretaries, before the director made that decision?

**Mr. Ouellet:** I am happy to be asked this question. I was expecting it. I am glad to say that the government has not followed the bad example of the previous government. We did not consult other departments or ministers before deciding to proceed with the decision of the director. In other words, we did not consult other colleagues on the course of action taken. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources was not consulted, as the previous government had wrongly done when it consulted the Minister of Transport.

**Mr. Clark:** Did the director consult the minister before the director exercised his discretion?

**Mr. Ouellet:** The director, according to law, indicated his intention to me. He did not ask me which of the three courses