

Oral Questions

into jail for a six-month period. While the minister is considering whether there should be compulsory or voluntary implementation of the metric system, why should those people have to go to jail just because of some whim of the minister? Why are they not allowed at least to have the benefit of the understanding which the minister gave the House the other day?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, let me assure you that I am not at all impressed by the plea of the hon. member—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ouellet:—which is absolutely without foundation. Nobody will be charged or threatened with being jailed until the program has been fully implemented, which will not be before two years down the line. All the stories dreamed up by the Conservative Party, which has decided to make a political issue of a non-partisan question, are false and without foundation. The hon. member should be ashamed of creating fear.

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● (1500)

NATIONAL RESOURCES**MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON REFERRAL OF OFFSHORE OWNERSHIP TO SUPREME COURT**

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister who has just come back to the House and who will know that yesterday, at about five minutes to three o'clock, the Minister of Justice, in answer to a question as to whether or not the government was going to refer the question of offshore jurisdiction to the Supreme Court of Canada, said:

—there has been no decision made by the government at this time on that question.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether that response by the Minister of Justice yesterday was a truthful response and, if so, would he tell the House of Commons at which time, what time yesterday or today, did the cabinet of Canada meet to make the decision to refer the offshore jurisdiction question to the Supreme Court of Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the decision became effective when the order in council was signed some time this morning. I cannot say exactly at what hour.

Mr. Clark: The Prime Minister perhaps wonders why his word is not accepted. Responses like that are the reason.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

TIMING OF CABINET DECISION

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Let me put the question again. When did cabinet make that decision?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the question of what goes on in cabinet, as the right hon. member knows, is a matter for the Privy Council to keep to themselves. When a decision is made by cabinet is when that decision results in an order or in a decision by the Prime Minister.

An hon. Member: Yes?

Mr. Trudeau: That is right. Sometimes you discuss questions and you do not make the decision effective then, because you want to know if certain other things are going to happen, whether negotiations can become effective, and so on. There was discussion of this matter over the past many weeks. The decision became final this morning when the order in council was signed.

TIME OF CABINET MEETING

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): When did the cabinet of Canada meet to make this decision?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: And was the Minister of Justice telling the truth to the House of Commons yesterday when he gave his answer?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the cabinet met yesterday, yesterday morning. It took what in effect was a conditional decision, and that decision became effective this morning.

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PETITIONS**TABLING OF REPORTS OF CLERK OF PETITIONS**

Madam Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has laid upon the Table reports of the Clerk of Petitions stating that he has examined the petitions presented on Tuesday, May 18, 1982 and finds that they meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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PRIVILEGE

MR. ROBINSON (BURNABY)—ALLEGED UNFOUNDED ANSWER BY MR. KAPLAN

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege, as a result of the answers which were given today during question period by the Solicitor General (Mr. Kaplan).

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Sit down.

Madam Speaker: Order.