

Oral Questions

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): The hon. member should know, as the premier of Saskatchewan knows, that it is important to continue to provide supplies of oil for Canada in the future. The kind of policy he advocates, that of reducing oil prices, would ensure that before very long there would not be adequate supplies of oil to meet Canadian needs.

INFLATION—ALLEGED FAILURE OF CONTROL PROGRAM

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Is it, then, official government policy that wages and salaries should remain controlled at 6 per cent while the consumer price index is to be permitted, as has been the case for the last three months, to go up at an annual rate of about 10 per cent causing working people across the country to experience a continuing decline in their standard of living, or will the minister recognize that the controls program as it now exists is not only unworkable in terms of restraining prices but is unfair to Canadians everywhere?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): I would dispute the conclusions reached by the hon. gentleman and refer him to the trend on the non-food side of the index. The fact of the matter is that we in Canada will have to pay higher costs for imported goods as a result of the depreciation in the value of the Canadian dollar and higher energy prices. These increases have to be borne by all Canadians. We, as a government, believe that the people will recognize and accept the fact that these additional cost increases have to be met and that they cannot expect the government to cushion the community against all the changes.

* * *

[Translation]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

DIFFERENCE IN PRICES OF GASOLINE BETWEEN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC

Mr. Armand Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

I put a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on May 13 last and he replied that the price of gas at the Quebec and Ontario border indicated a difference of over 15 cents a gallon which was due to competition. Could the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs launch an inquiry to see why there is such a difference and who pockets the money?

[English]

Hon. A. C. Abbott (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to ask the director of investigations to look into this matter and report back to me, and I will be getting in touch with the hon. member.

[Mr. Broadbent.]

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

KNOWLEDGE OF MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE OF SENATOR DAVEY'S INTEREST IN BLUE WATER RACING ASSOCIATION

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. It has to do with press reports that Senator Keith Davey, who is a well known confidant of the Prime Minister and chief Liberal campaign director, has the controlling interest in Blue Water Racing Associates, and that Senator Davey has in fact made representations to the branch of the minister's department concerned with parimutuel betting licensing and saliva testing administration. Can the minister advise the House whether these press reports are correct and if his department has knowledge of Senator Davey's interest in this particular company?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the press report the hon. member is talking about, all I can remember of that paper is that when I was first appointed Minister of Agriculture they wanted to know where Amherstburg, Ontario was. I have no knowledge of what is in this press report because I do not read that paper very often. However, since the matter has been brought to my attention I will check. I have no recollection of Senator Davey ever making any representations to me concerning racing but I will check with the department. Several authorities in Ontario having to do with racing have made representations to me about racing matters, but the one I am particularly thinking of is the Jockey Club which continually makes representations about offtrack betting. But I have no recollection of this report at all.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister would be interested in seeing that justice not only be done but appear to be done, so I would ask him to look into the matter and report to the House with respect to this particular allegation. When he is doing that, would the minister undertake to make a statement to the House with respect to this matter, possibly on motions, so he can clarify it; and would he let us have what details he is able to obtain through his department respecting the nature of the representations made, if any, by Senator Davey and the results of those representations.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I will use my good offices to make an investigation to find out what representations were made. I am not sure which race track or racing authority the hon. member is talking about, but I will ask for a complete breakdown of those people who have made representations to me and will follow the proper course to allow the hon. member to be informed.

INTEREST OF SENATOR DAVEY IN BLUE WATER RACING ASSOCIATION—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I have a final supplementary question which I will address to the Acting Prime Minister. Would the Acting Prime Minister tell the House whether he considers on behalf of the government,