

The hon. member should know that there is no obligation whatsoever on a minister to make a statement inside the House as opposed to outside the House. In fact, it says in Beauchesne's at page 264—

[Translation]

This is what Beauchesne says, and I quote:

The option of a minister to make a statement either in the House or outside it may be the subject of comment, but is not the subject of a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely clear according to Beauchesne's citation.

[English]

I resent very much that the hon. member has chosen at this point on a Friday afternoon, after having almost completed an opposition debate in which the minister took part—and while there are only two Conservative members left in the House—to raise this matter. It is an opposition motion, and yet we have this ridiculous scene with only two Conservative members in the House.

Mr. Stevens: There are four.

Mr. Collenette: Four, then.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Hon. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a brief word about the question of privilege raised by the hon. member for York-Peel (Mr. Stevens). As the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Collenette) has said, there is no legal or procedural obligation on a minister to make a statement in the House. However, I must say that when I heard the minister answer the hon. member during question period this morning by saying that he had no statement, I concluded that what we heard on the radio this morning was wrong and that no statement would be made today.

● (1650)

For the minister to make that statement outside the House this afternoon is, I think, pretty close to contempt for the House.

While I am on my feet, I may say to the hon. member for York-Peel that he should make sure he has the right to raise a question of privilege on Monday. I hope he will not rely on the notice he has now given but will send Madam Speaker written notice on Monday morning.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think we have heard enough on this point for the moment. As has been indicated by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), there is a procedure by which notice can be sent to the Speaker. I presume this will be done if the hon. member intends to pursue the point further.

Mr. Paul E. McRae (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr. Speaker, in the short time left in this debate I should like to touch on one or two matters. I am always interested in what the hon. member for York-Peel (Mr. Stevens) has to say. One or two

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points he made in the early part of his speech caught my attention. When the government bought Pacific Petroleum, he was one of those who made a lot of noise and claimed it was a bad deal. Now, two years later, I am told that Pacific Petroleum is worth two or three times what was paid for it.

Any purchase that can double in value after two or three years is certainly a good deal. In 1976 \$340 million was paid for Atlantic Richfield, and now the company is worth over \$1 billion. These companies have shown pretty nice profits, and they indicate what has happened in the oil industry. When we bought Petrofina, we thought it was a good investment. Sales at the pumps for Pacific Pete increased by 15 per cent overnight, and there was a tenfold increase in credit card sales.

When private industry buys something, it expects to receive a return on the investment, but we do not hear anything about this when the government makes a purchase. It is almost as if the government spent that \$1.5 billion, not that it invested the money and expects a considerable return in the years ahead.

The minister read a list of cities where unemployment has increased in the last year. I should like to list some cities where things have gone the other way. In St. John's, unemployment decreased from 13.5 per cent to 11.1 per cent; in Halifax, from 9.1 per cent to 7.5; Quebec City, from 9.8 per cent to 8.9 per cent; Sudbury, from 10.3 per cent to 8.3 per cent; Toronto, from 5.6 per cent to 5.3 per cent; Vancouver, 8.8 per cent to 4.4 per cent; and in Victoria, from 8.6 per cent to 7.3 per cent. It goes both ways, and to present just one list does not give the whole picture.

I have been disappointed that there has been so little discussion in this House over the years about the theories that govern world economics, so I was very pleased that the hon. member for York-Peel injected that into the discussion. Max Saltsman, a former NDP member of this House, used to bring this sort of thing up, but I have not heard any discussion along these lines recently.

The hon. member for York-Peel said that Keynesian theories no longer prevail. I expect that he never accepted the Keynesian theories, although they seemed to work fairly well for many years. Several times over the last four or five years when the subject has come up in the House I have said that the Keynesian theories do not work when there is stagflation. The hon. member spoke of supply side economics and a sort of "new approach", but I wish he had defined his terms a little better. I assume he was referring to supply side economics or the Milton Friedman monetarist viewpoint of the University of Chicago as contrasted to the Keynes-Cambridge theory. Friedman's view is that all one has to do is control the money supply and allow total freedom in the market, and the market will solve all the problems.

The hon. member for York-Peel has left the chamber, so I cannot debate this with him, but I hope to return to it on another occasion.

There is another point with respect to the supply side theory that deals with a fairly strong interventionist policy. When we deal with the energy situation, we are really dealing with