

Oral Questions

Miss MacDonald: Are paying for it.

Mr. Lalonde: —will have paid less under this government than they would have paid under the Conservative budget.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REVOCATION OF PRICE INCREASES

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. I cannot ask him to stop beating his wife, but I can ask him to stop beating the Canadian consumer.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: When the 18-cent excise tax was proposed in December, 1979, it did not apply to heating fuel. In St. John's, Newfoundland, heating fuels are up 50 cents per gallon in the last year because of federal tax increases. They would not have been up a dime under our 18-cent excise tax.

Mr. Lalonde: What about the other increases?

Mr. Crosbie: The minister's colleague has tabled, since the budget, four increases by non-budgetary notices in the House. There were two yesterday—the Canadian ownership charge and the first Lalonde levy; \$2.6 billion in additional taxation since the budget came down; over 15 cents per gallon. Is the minister prepared to revoke these increases and to eliminate these notices given yesterday in an effort, no matter how feeble, to meet his commitment to Canadians when he asked them to vote for him and the price would stay down? Will the minister make some pretence at trying to observe that, for the people of Cape Breton are now paying over a 60 per cent increase in their heating fuel oil and over 60 cents more per gallon for gasoline since he came to office and stabbed them in the back?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, of course I will not accept the suggestion of the hon. gentleman. In every speech he makes, he urges me to contain the fiscal deficit. The step which was taken yesterday will contain the fiscal deficit.

Mr. Crosbie: Meet your promises.

Mr. MacEachen: Let me also add that I will be pleased at any time to present my program, in comparison with that of the hon. gentleman, to my electors in Cape Breton-Highlands-Canso. I have no doubt which they will choose.

Mr. Nowlan: Will you show them your ad, Allan?

PRICE PAID BY FARMERS FOR DIESEL FUEL

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Energy,

Mines and Resources. The price of diesel fuel to Canadian farmers has increased by some 62 cents per gallon or, to put it another way, the price of diesel fuel to Canadian farmers has doubled since the Liberals and the NDP combined forces to defeat our government in December, 1979, on the issue of oil pricing. During that period of time domestic oil prices have increased by some 30 per cent, from \$13.75 per barrel to \$17.75 per barrel. This currently represents 41 per cent of the world price.

In view of the fact that this price increase amounts to nothing more than a massive federal government rip-off, in view of the serious impact of this price increase on the agricultural producing sector and the need for relief in that particular sector, as was recognized in the Conservative budget of 1979 which provided for a rebate and an energy tax credit, will the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources recommend to his cabinet colleagues some relief for the producers of Canada?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the government has the fate of the producers of the country very much in mind, particularly the farmers.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lalonde: This is why, under our budget of last year and our energy program, we have proposed a scheme whereby—

An hon. Member: Scheme is the correct word.

Miss MacDonald: Try manipulation.

Mr. Lalonde: —Canadian consumers and farmers in particular will not have to pay the type of prices planned under the Conservative budget.

Mr. Clark: They will have to pay twice as much.

Mr. Lalonde: I want to stress quite clearly that Canadian consumers at large, as I have indicated, have saved \$1.9 billion, thanks to the measures we have adopted.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lalonde: Also the farmers of Canada have benefited from this. A family of four has saved \$335—

Mr. Crosbie: They have not saved a dime.

Mr. Lalonde: —since December, 1979. This includes the farmers of the country, as well as every other family.

Mr. Clark: Is that why they are going bankrupt?

Mr. Lalonde: That is what has happened under the Liberal government and the budget presented by my colleague.