

Can the Minister assure the consumers of Canada that they will be getting a fair deal, including a cut in natural gas prices, by November 1?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, this is a matter that is under negotiation. Our officials are meeting again today, as we have met constantly over the last two weeks. I am meeting again with the western Ministers tomorrow, and I do not discuss details of these negotiations until they are concluded.

PLEDGE ATTRIBUTED TO MINISTER

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources pledged, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians would never have to pay more for Canadian natural gas than Americans do. Is it the attention of the Minister to live up to this pledge?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated to the Hon. Member that I will not discuss details of these negotiations in public until they are concluded. I can assure him that all Parties are trying very hard to come up with a conclusion which is fair to both consumers and producers.

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BANKS AND BANKING

ESTEY COMMISSION—MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a question directed to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister knows well the meaning of ministerial responsibility. He also knows that the Estey Commission's terms of reference are such that it may not deal in the slightest way with ministerial responsibility.

Considering that the Minister of Finance just a few moments ago said that he refused to answer questions on the subject matter before the Estey Commission indefinitely into the future—

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): On that particular issue.

Mr. Broadbent:—even if it is dealing with ministerial responsibility, my question to the Prime Minister is simply this. Does he agree with this complete abdication of responsibility by the Minister of Finance?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I understood the Minister of Finance to say that he was disinclined to answer the same question repeated time and time again. He was quite open of course, as he is obliged to be, to respond to any other question at any time submitted by any Members of the House.

One of the Hon. Members referred to the Prime Minister of Great Britain. The Prime Minister of Great Britain would be

Oral Questions

very surprised to see the extent to which the Canadian Prime Minister and all Ministers are here. We try to be here every day to respond fully to the questions from Hon. Members.

BANK BAIL-OUT—INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Considering that the Prime Minister, by his answer, has agreed that ministerial responsibility questions will be answered by the Government, I would like to ask him, considering that the Minister of State for Finance came into the House one Monday in March, gave an estimate of cost that was \$100 million less than the Inspector of Banks conveyed to Ottawa on the Sunday night, will he as Prime Minister answer for his responsibility and tell the House did he or did he not have this information on the weekend. Please answer.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): The Hon. Member does well—he always does well until he adopts the Clarence Darrow pose. In point of fact the response of the Minister of State for Finance has been full and complete.

An Hon. Member: Yes or no?

Mr. Mulroney: The Hon. Member yells yes or no. One of the reasons that we responded with a commission of inquiry was pursuant to strong suggestions made by the NDP who indicated in the House of Commons that the only manner in which this matter could properly be handled would be by a commission of inquiry. We sought out someone we thought was the most distinguished person in Canada in terms of independence to conduct this commission of inquiry, and we want to let him get on with the job, and do it.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

U.S.S.R.—EMIGRATION OF JEWS

Mr. Bill Attewell (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State of External Affairs but in his absence I will direct it to the Parliamentary Secretary. There was encouraging news out of Israel last week that thousands of Soviet Jews may receive permission to emigrate to Israel. I know the Parliamentary Secretary was with the secretary of State in Moscow earlier this year when the plight of refuseniks was forcefully discussed. Is this encouraging news valid? Will the Jews in Russia be given freedom to emigrate, and freedom from social and religious harassment and imprisonment?

• (1450)

Mr. Gerry Weiner (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I know the Hon. Member for Don Valley East has been very concerned about the plight of Soviet Jewry. The Government is closely monitoring the situation of Soviet Jews but regretfully sees no