

happened in this case. The government has consistently refused to acknowledge any implication or involvement.

Mr. Althouse: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the hon. member would entertain a question at this time, or does he prefer to wait until he has completed his remarks?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I would be glad to entertain a question at the end of my remarks, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Rossi: He was never any good at answering questions, even when he was a minister.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: At least some of us attained the position of minister, but some never will.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. I am perfectly willing to accommodate the hon. member whose right it is to determine whether or not he wishes to entertain a question. Will he advise the Chair whether he wishes to or not?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Go ahead.

Mr. Althouse: I wonder if the hon. member would enlighten the House as to whether he considers himself, having been a minister, as being equally culpable in this matter since he has just outlined the responsibilities of ministers.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I can tell the hon. member one thing. As far as we are concerned, without the help of the NDP and the Liberal coalition, which the hon. member is aware of, familiar with and supportive of on a number of issues, including the Constitution, if we had been in power this matter would have been resolved to the satisfaction of the public. There would have been no concealment by our party. We take our responsibilities seriously. What is happening here is an attempt to cover up and deny responsibility on the part of this government.

Mr. Masters: Answer the question.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I have answered the question. There would be no cover up as far as we are concerned. The member knew nothing of cover ups until he supported this government for a while.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, could we have a little order in the House? The fact is that the member never speaks. He never does anything except vote in favour of the government.

There are a number of indications that the government was fully aware of the operations of this cartel and the impact that occurred. There is in the public record a Gulf memo of March 8, 1974, which indicates that energy, mines and resources officials recognized that Canadian utilities must be prepared to pay the export prices. That is the fixed gate price.

Summer Recess

Second, as I have indicated, the companies initially were very concerned about the effects of the combines law. They were given assurances by this government that no action would be taken with respect to this question of combines law as long as it was in power.

The third indication was that the cabinet apparently discussed the possible domestic consequences with the cartel. The simple fact is that Messrs. MacNabb and Runnalls are now named as co-conspirators. The Minister of Justice can say that they do not stand accused of anything, but as far as this is concerned, they are accused of being co-conspirators.

I can understand why the government wants to adjourn. It is embarrassed. It is therefore attempting to get Parliament out of Ottawa. It wants to shut down for an extended period of time. During the time the Prime Minister is entertaining the other leaders of the western industrialized world, he does not want questions on the floor of the House about the participation of this government with respect to a cartel and the responsibility it bears in that connection. I can therefore understand why the government wants Parliament out of Ottawa.

We take our responsibilities seriously in terms of the role of the opposition. Our responsibility is to ensure that it cannot be perceived in this country that anyone, including the person who holds the highest political office in this country, is above the law.

Second, we have a legitimate interest in terms of finding out exactly what the political responsibility is with respect to this matter. We should learn from what has happened in the past and indicate that that action is not acceptable as far as political activity in this country is concerned.

I have outlined some of the incidents and the background. This is a vital issue because it goes right to the heart and credibility of this government. I say in all sincerity and with a sense of sadness that there is a heavy smell of scandal regarding this matter. The people of Canada are entitled to the information with respect to the political activities of this government and what action it took as soon as this matter was brought to its attention.

An adjournment will clearly take the pressure off this government. It will not be subject to questions on the floor of the House of Commons and it will not have to discuss ministerial responsibility. This issue is making the government very nervous. As I have indicated—

Mrs. Erola: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the hon. member if he has any knowledge of how many jobs were saved by the actions of this government.

Mr. Beatty: The whole cabinet.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I was going to indicate to the hon. member that his time had expired. I can only permit him to entertain a question with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?