

Oral Questions

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I do not know the answer to that. If there have been, the number would be extremely small because the number of prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act has been extremely small. If long ago any were held totally in camera—not in secret, but in camera—I, literally, do not know. I can inform myself of that and inform the hon. member.

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ENERGY**DECISION OF OPEC COUNTRIES TO FREEZE OIL PRICES**

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the decision taken over the weekend by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to freeze oil prices at current levels until the end of the year, could the minister tell the House whether the Canadian government will follow this example and cancel the current Canadian policy of increasing the price of oil by \$1 a barrel and the price of gas 17 cents per 1,000 cubic feet on July 1 which, if allowed to take place, would add approximately 1 per cent to the consumer price index and cause an increase in unemployment by approximately 30,000?

● (1422)

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I, too, was very pleased to see that the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries decided not to increase the price of oil at this time. This is very much the position taken by the Canadian government. Representations were made to OPEC urging moderation on their part.

As to the question of Canadian oil prices, the hon. member will know that a year ago an arrangement was reached among the consuming and producing provinces to move our prices up toward world prices in orderly jumps of \$1 every six months. That particular move will take place effective July 1 of this year. For the information of the hon. member, that would still keep Canadian oil prices significantly below world prices and significantly below the average price in the United States.

Mr. Broadbent: It was widely assumed among OPEC a year ago that they would probably have a further increase on July 1. They had enough sense to change their mind because, as they pointed out on the weekend, further increases in the price would only cause further deterioration in world economies and lead to more unemployment. The minister is factually wrong in terms of the comparison with the U.S. price.

I should like to ask whether, in light of this, the minister will confirm that studies undertaken by his department show that if the \$1 per barrel increase is allowed to go ahead on July 1, for the first time in recent history the oil price for Canada will be almost identical to that in the United States, taking away from us the \$1 competitive advantage for Canadian industry which is so central a concern and need right now, with the high unemployment levels we have?

[Mr. Jarvis.]

Mr. Gillespie: No, Mr. Speaker, I have already referred to the fact that our studies indicate that there will be a continuing and significant differential between the Canadian price and the U.S. price.

Mr. Broadbent: It will not be the first time that the minister's figures and ours have differed. Ours show that the gap is going to be almost wiped out entirely. Apart from that important fact, is he saying that the government will not reconsider its position and will cancel the intended increase in price that is coming on July 1, which will be so disastrous for the consumers of Canada and for Canadian industry which needs all the competitive advantage it can get?

Mr. Gillespie: I have already referred to the fact that the price increase which will take place this summer was arrived at through negotiation with the producing and consuming provinces of this country, that it was supported by a majority of the consuming provinces of the country and, further, that the federal government is providing in the order of \$1 billion in subsidies in order to cushion the effect of higher international prices against the Canadian price.

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[Translation]

TRANSPORT**FUTURE USE OF "MACLEAN"**

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Transport and of his parliamentary secretary, may I direct my question to the right hon. Prime Minister?

Considering that the *MacLean*, owned by the Department of Transport, is lying abandoned in the port of Quebec, could the Prime Minister tell the House what will become of this ship which has honoured Canada for many years? Will she be turned into a national museum or sold to private enterprise?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am aware that this matter is of highest concern to the Minister of Transport, and he will give an answer to the hon. member when he is back in the House tomorrow.

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[English]

FINANCE**DUMPING DUTY ON WIDE-FLANGE STEEL BEAMS**

Mr. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance is not in his place, I will direct my question, if I may, to the right hon. Prime Minister. Can he tell the House what the rate of dumping duty on wide-flange steel beams will be after June 29?