

Oral Questions

ter to change his policies along the lines of a short-term drop in the dollar, a short-term loosening of the money supply, greater long-term foreign investment, and a slowdown in the Canadianization program?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I meet frequently with members of the Liberal caucus and I intend to continue to meet with members of the Liberal caucus. I do not believe the affairs of the Liberal caucus are a matter for questioning at this particular time, however. That is a matter for the Liberal caucus. It is not a matter of government administration which is the normal subject of questioning on the orders of the day.

PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD BY MEMBERS OF LIBERAL CAUCUS

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, perhaps the Prime Minister will be giving the same instructions to the hon. member for Kitchener as he gave to the rest of his colleagues earlier in the week.

I want to indicate to the minister that this was a public interview given by the member for Kitchener to the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*. May I ask the minister whether, as a matter of government policy, he is prepared to consider representations from members of caucus calling for a short-term drop in the dollar, the loosening of the money supply, a slowdown on the Canadianization policy, and greater long-term foreign investment, as was indicated by the hon. member for Kitchener?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): If the hon. member really wants to know what is happening in our caucus, I invite him to join. It is a very happy place to be.

QUERY RESPECTING PROPOSALS MADE BY CABINET MINISTERS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question. It is not necessary to join that caucus. We need only read the newspapers and the letters that the Minister of National Health and Welfare sends.

The matter raised by my colleague indicates a second group of Liberal MPs have made public their disagreement with the government's economic policy. That explains why the Liberals and New Democratic Party yesterday ran away from the opportunity for Members of Parliament to vote on the budget in this House of Commons.

The minister has said he will not discuss representations he is receiving from backbenchers because his Prime Minister regards them as mere nobodies. Perhaps he would accept the distinction relating to representations from cabinet ministers. Is the Minister of Finance now considering any specific proposals from any colleagues in cabinet for change in the budget?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, the answer to that specific question is no.

● (1130)

SPECIFIC PROPOSAL INQUIRY

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, since the Minister of Finance is unsure whether he is the Minister of Finance, perhaps I should have directed the question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Let me put my question in a different way. Has the Minister of Finance received any specific proposals for change in the budget from any of his colleagues in cabinet?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): No, Madam Speaker.

LETTER SENT BY MINISTER OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Did she suffer severe indigestion when she swallowed her letter of recommendation to the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Cousineau: Be serious.

Mr. Clark: To put it in a more serious vein, the Minister of Finance has now denied receiving a letter which the Minister of National Health and Welfare had said publicly that she sent. How does the Minister of National Health and Welfare explain the difference between her word, given and published, and the word just given by the Minister of Finance?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, as far as I understood the question, and in reply to the first part of it concerning indigestion, the answer is no, I never suffered from anything like that. The second part of the question had to do with the problem with the postal situation. I did not quite understand what letter to what minister he was talking about.

EXPLANATION SOUGHT OF LETTER'S FATE

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, we are all aware of the problems with the postal system. The Minister of National Health and Welfare showed temporary courage and acquired temporary notoriety when she deliberately published a letter to the Prime Minister containing recommendations to be considered by the Minister of Finance for changes in the budget. Since the Minister of Finance has now said that he has not received the recommendation, or indeed any recommendation for any change from any minister, will the Minister of National Health and Welfare explain to the House of Commons just what happened to her letter?