

*Oral Questions*

to bring these together in a way that the required budget preparation will not be jeopardized.

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**ENERGY**

## INQUIRY AS TO DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF ENERGY POLICY

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition):** Just to be clear on this, Madam Speaker, perhaps I should direct this question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, who promised an energy statement to the House of Commons. Does the minister intend to make that statement before budget day or, if not, does he intend to make it on budget day?

● (1120)

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Madam Speaker, I would like to give the Leader of the Opposition the assurance that this government will not do what the previous government did and come out with a budget without having an energy policy. They will come out simultaneously.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** God help the country!

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**PENSIONS**

## INADEQUACY OF OLD AGE SUPPLEMENT

**Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Can the minister explain why government members turned down my motion under Standing Order 43 to give consideration to helping older people in this country cope with the incredibly high cost of food when, as it is obvious from figures released today, their \$35 old age supplement is already eaten up?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Madam Speaker, I do not know whether I should reply to a question which seems to me slightly out of order. The hon. member knows quite well that no government member said no. I am unable to identify who said no to such a motion and I wonder if the hon. member can do so. We are always particularly interested in the fate of the humble and the poor in Canada. We have always worked in that direction and we will continue to do so.

[*English*]**CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

## PROTECTION OF CONSUMERS FROM DOUBLE DIGIT INFLATION

**Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Madam Speaker, in that case I shall reintroduce my motion on Monday and hope that hon. members on the government side and members on all sides of the House will agree to giving pensioners a break.

My supplementary question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Surely in this instance the minister cannot deny his economic responsibility to the consumer in view of today's disturbing figures, and since the minister has so much clout in the cabinet—he certainly has enough portfolios—will he assure the House that he will protect the welfare of the consumer and through the October 28 budget stop the double digit inflation which is so devastating to those Canadians on fixed incomes?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General):** Madam Speaker, it is obvious that I do not shirk my responsibilities toward consumers. On the other hand, the hon. member should not think that macro-economic policies come under the jurisdiction of my department. If he has some questions to raise or representations to make, he should direct them to the Minister of Finance.

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[*English*]**THE BUDGET**

## INQUIRY WHETHER PROVISIONS WILL INCREASE LIVING COSTS

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River):** Madam Speaker, my question again follows up on the news about the consumer price index today, and I would like to direct it to the Minister of Finance. There has been, as we all realize, a substantial increase in the annual inflation rate. We are looking now at a figure of 10.7 per cent. There has been a dramatic increase in the price of food, the rate of which is running at roughly 13 per cent, and a loss in purchasing power for most Canadian families, running at about \$1,400 a year. This has continued over a three-year period.

I wonder if the Minister of Finance would mind confirming for this House that when his budget is presented on October 28 we will find a dramatic increase again in the cost of living for all Canadians, including dramatic increases in the price of energy and substantial tax increases? Would the minister be prepared to confirm that we will not find relief from this burden and that in fact inflation will probably be out of control as a result of this new budget?

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, it is not possible for me to indicate now what measures will be in the budget, but I