

promised in his famous red barn speech that a Tory Government would completely eliminate the petroleum gas and revenue tax. It is well known that Conservative Premier Peter Lougheed wants to hold the Government to this promise. Are the Minister of Energy and her Government still committed to the complete elimination of the petroleum and gas revenue tax in an energy agreement?

● (1500)

**Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, as I say almost daily in the House, negotiations with the western producing provinces are going ahead. There is a meeting today in Calgary. There was a meeting yesterday in Ottawa. At such time as we conclude an agreement I will so report to the House.

**Mr. Waddell:** Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the Prime Minister has opened the red barn door and let out the Minister of Finance's horse.

#### GOVERNMENT REVENUE

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway):** In view of the fact that the spending Estimates indicate that the Government expects to get more revenue from the oil and gas industry than last year, how does it expect to increase its revenue without breaking its promises and holding on to the PGRT?

**Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am not going to negotiate in public when I am negotiating in private with the Energy Ministers. In terms of the Estimates, if the Member will take a good look at the Estimates he will notice that there are PIP payments which must be made as we promised.

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#### CLERK OF PETITIONS' REPORT

##### GASOLINE PRICE INCREASES IN QUEBEC

**Mr. Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the petition presented by the Hon. Member for Duvernay (Mr. Della Noce) on Wednesday, March 13, 1985, meets the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

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#### PRIVILEGE

##### ALLEGED THREATENING REMARK OF MR. McLEAN—RULING BY MR. SPEAKER

**Mr. Speaker:** I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised by the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) on March 12, 1985. The Speaker, as Members know, does not judge the issue. Only the House can do that. The Speaker must simply decide whether, on the evidence available, there is a case sufficiently strong to justify the setting

#### *Business of the House*

aside of the regular business of the House and taking it under immediate consideration.

The Chair has a very delicate situation to deal with. The Hon. Member for Hamilton East sincerely believes that her privileges, and those of all Members, have been violated as a result of a press report of a statement attributed to the Secretary of State (Mr. McLean). I do not think it would be going too far for me to indicate that, given what I read in the press, I can thoroughly understand why the Hon. Member for Hamilton East and other Members were distressed.

Privilege is itself an exception from the normal law and falls within carefully prescribed and narrow bounds, as the Hon. Member indicated herself in her submission. As she also indicated, the question I must decide is whether there is prima facie evidence of a direct threat which attempted to influence Members' actions in the House. The action that is complained of is a statement to a reporter. There are, therefore, two issues: one, would the statement, if made, constitute a breach of privilege; and two, the prior issue, whether the action complained of in fact occurred.

As her evidence that such a statement was made, the Hon. Member relies exclusively on the newspaper report. Hon. Members will know that the Chair has seldom, if ever, given much import to such reports for reasons every Member who has ever been misquoted will understand all too well. In such cases the first question for the Chair is, therefore, the quality of the evidence.

In this case the remarks of the Hon. Secretary of State indicated clearly that the Minister does not deny saying the words complained of. However, he did also say that the report placed his words "in a new context", and that he did not make the threat which has been inferred from the way in which he was reported. As Hon. Members would expect, in a factual conflict between a report in the press and the statement of a Member to the effect that he or she has been improperly quoted, the Chair must always take the word of the Member. I do so in this case. No further issues need be resolved therefore, and I rule that a prima facie case of a question of privilege has not been made.

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

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#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

##### WEEKLY STATEMENT

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. friend what the business of the House will be for the ensuing week.

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to announce that I will be allotting next Tuesday as the sixth Opposition Day in the current period of supply.