

Oral Questions

Mr. Rae: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance would try to pretend that he is the piano player in the brothel who does not know what is going on upstairs.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Rae: I can assure you, Madam Speaker, that it is not a very convincing part.

Let the Minister of Finance answer this simple question: what is the nature of the duties assigned to the Solicitor General of Canada with respect to my riding and with respect to other constituencies? Will he table the list of those ministers who are carrying out these functions, and will he please tell us what in God's name they are?

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, the hon. member knows about a lot of things but one thing he does not know anything about is cabinet government, and maybe he never will.

Some hon. Members: Oink, oink, oink!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order! Will the House come back to order? This only shortens the question period. The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. MacEachen: The hon. member has asked for the third time what the responsibilities of regional ministers are. I would be glad to go over the ground for the hon. member. The first point I want to make is that it is the special responsibility of regional ministers—

An hon. Member: Table the list.

Mr. MacEachen: —to represent the interests of regions within the cabinet.

An hon. Member: Table the list.

Mr. MacEachen: In my region—

An hon. Member: Table the list.

Mr. MacEachen: Hon. members are saying "table the list." I will come to that, but I want to answer the question first.

Miss MacDonald: You had three tries.

Mr. MacEachen: In my particular region, and I have discharged this particular responsibility long enough to know what it represents—

An hon. Member: Too long.

Mr. MacEachen: In my region it means around the cabinet table representing the interests of all the region, the 11 constituencies in that region. When it was a question of providing in the constituency of Annapolis Valley-Hants a very substantial program of assistance to Michelin, it was not possible for the hon. member for Annapolis Valley-Hants to come to the cabinet table and argue that case—

An hon. Member: What about Firestone.

Mr. MacEachen: —but it was possible for me, as the regional minister, to do that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacEachen: That is the main function of regional ministers. The hon. member has made a great to do about tabling the list. When the Prime Minister comes back I will be happy to recommend to him that he make the list available. I am sure that that list will be on the Table and will confound the hon. member and begin the process of educating him in the process of cabinet government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PETRO-CANADA

ACQUISITION OF PETROFINA—ALLEGED ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, I know you will agree with me when I say it is very, very distressing for this House to watch a marriage break up before our very eyes.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and it relates to a letter which came from the president of Maison Placements, an investment firm in Montreal. This letter refers to what the writer calls clear signs of a major leak in connection with the Petrofina acquisition, resulting in illegal profits to many people. It goes on to observe that the price of Petrofina shares was around \$60 when the first rumour came into the market place, compared to the price bid of \$120. I should point out that a chart which I have shows that Petrofina skyrocketed during this period whereas BP Canada, which is the other candidate for acquisition, was flat, and probably is a little bit lower in price now than the shares were at the time of the first rumours regarding Petrofina.

I have raised this point in the House on a number of occasions. The clear reason for this is that these leaks have driven up the price and have caused the Canadian taxpayers and consumers to pay more money for Petrofina. My question is this. Upon receipt of this letter what action has the minister taken? Specifically, has he referred the letter to the Toronto Stock Exchange which is investigating this situation, and has he discussed the matter with the president of Petro-Canada? This question is similar to the one I asked the minister about a week ago, to which I got no answer.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the hon. member referred to a possible marriage break-up. I hope he will not be attending a divorce next Friday night.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: Your wit is as good as your energy policy.