

ward. We are going to hear about that as well, at the parliamentary committee.

● (1430)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, my question will be very brief and is directed to the Prime Minister.

How can the Prime Minister say what he just said, considering that when the Canadian Commercial Bank's situation was examined in committee, it was made clear that the problem was caused by loans connected with energy transactions in the United States? How can the Prime Minister say what he just said about the National Energy Policy, when we have proof that the bad loans were the result of loans made in the United States in the energy sector?

[English]

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, the things that happened in Alberta over the last five years are a direct result of the problems of the national energy policy and what had happened to world energy—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. McDougall:—and we are fully prepared to explore that in a parliamentary committee. The financial institutions of western Canada deserve every bit as much support from this Government as the kinds of companies that were given support by the Liberal Government when it was in office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR DETAILS CONCERNING GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand the Minister's reply.

In the House, the Official Opposition supported the position the Minister took last March, on the basis of her announcements regarding Bank's financial situation. She can hardly blame us today for asking questions on the subject. We supported her in the past.

What we are asking the Minister today is: How is it that last March, the people of Canada—and the Minister of Finance said this from her seat in the House—were told that the \$255 million was adequate and that the Bank's situation would improve?

Oral Questions

We are asking the Minister what has changed between March and July, and today? Were we lied to during the whole exercise in March?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order please! I think I heard the Hon. Member use an unparliamentary term, and I must—

Mr. Garneau:—were we lied to?

Mr. Speaker: One may not say indirectly what one cannot say directly

[English]

A word that is unparliamentary in its intent cannot be put into the record indirectly. May I simply ask the Hon. Member to rephrase his question?

[Translation]

Mr. Garneau: Mr. Speaker, the matter is much too important to spend time debating a point of order. What I said, I said. I am prepared to withdraw what I said, if it serves the purposes of our debate.

[English]

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, in March this Government faced a decision on a western financial institution in consultation with the chartered banks and two western provinces. Had we closed that bank then the economic impact in Alberta would have been devastating, absolutely devastating. We have been monitoring the situation ever since.

An Hon. Member: Is it any better now?

Mrs. McDougall: We are prepared to take the decision today that we must take today. It is a different decision and circumstances have changed. We have prepared to face that decision today, just as we were prepared to face that one then.

BANK'S LENDING PRACTICES

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Prime Minister when something is wrong it is wrong whether it is in western Canada, central Canada, or eastern Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance. After saying in March that she had full confidence in the rescue package, was she aware of the imprudent lending practices of the Canadian Commercial Bank at that time, and the highly questionable accounting practices that described the financial situation, as well as the size of the bank's non-performing loans? When she said she had complete faith in that institution, was she aware of those types of matters?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, we were aware that the Canadian Commercial