

the budget. This is the way these matters are taken care of, which is a very normal way.

At the time the Chair ruled that the way the government had proceeded was in order. Far from preventing debate, such a measure will, in due time, take the form of specific legislation, which I am sure will give rise to a lengthy debate in this House. Thus, I think the hon. member was talking in the wrong way when she was complaining about the ways and means motion.

The hon. member talked about her visit to her riding over the weekend. She said she listened to her constituents there. I certainly wish that she had visited her constituents more in November and December of 1979. I think her constituents would have given her good advice concerning the proposed budget which the Conservative government was bringing in at that time. Since she has made a number of comments about colleagues of mine who are not in the House today, I might tell the hon. member while she is here that, indeed, she might have better spent her time in her riding listening to her constituents at that time rather than travelling in Europe. I would have thought that if her party's budget was that great she would have been in the House to vote for it rather than being stranded in Europe, as she was at that time.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wilson: Dirty blow!

Mr. Lalonde: Indeed, there are Canadians who are concerned with the high price of energy, and justly so. They are suffering from higher prices. It is important that the situation be put in perspective and that Canadian citizens have the true story about the situation.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands could have told a great many things to her constituents over the weekend, but obviously she did not. I can suggest a few things which she could have said to her electors. The first thing she could have told them is that, in spite of the latest increases, Canadian consumers are much better off under the Liberal government regime and the National Energy Program than they would have been under the Conservative budget, if it had been approved.

Miss MacDonald: No one would have believed it.

Mr. Lalonde: She could have even demonstrated that fact with figures. For instance, she could have said that a family of four has saved about \$370 on gasoline and heating oil since the election, compared with what they would have spent under the Conservative budget.

Mr. Wilson: Table the figures.

Mr. Lalonde: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will certainly give hon. members all the figures. It will be very easy. Last week we made preliminary calculations and I indicated to the House that savings to the consumer had been \$1.9 billion. In effect, those figures, including the latest increases, represent a \$2.2

Energy

billion saving to the Canadian consumer since December, 1979.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: For a family of four this represents a saving of \$370. The hon. member could have mentioned that to the good voters of her riding.

She could have demonstrated this all the more if she had used the figures from the Conservative budget, since she has made some reference to the 18-cent tax. There was a great deal more in that budget than that 18-cent tax. I remind the hon. member that on December 12 that 18-cent tax represented a \$6.35 increase per barrel. Then on January 1, 1980, there would have been a \$1 increase. On July 1 there would have been a \$2 increase. On October 1, there would have been another \$1 increase. On January 1, 1981, there was to be a \$2.25 increase. To these figures must be added the amount of the Syncrude levy, the petroleum compensation charge, which on April 1, 1980, would have been 15 cents. On June 12 it would have been 75 cents and in January and June of 1981 it would have been a \$2.15 increase per barrel under the Conservative budget. The hon. member could have told the voters in her riding: "Even with the latest increases it is still cheaper to buy gasoline under the Liberal arrangement than it would have been under the Conservative budget". It is cheaper by a significant amount, when you take into account the Alberta cutbacks which have added to the price we have had to charge the consumer. In effect, even as it stands at the present time, the difference between the Conservative regime and our arrangement is around 2.4 cents a litre. If one multiplies by 4.5, it gives an idea of what the cost would have been under the Conservative regime at the present time.

● (1550)

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): No self-respecting person will accept that.

Mr. Lalonde: Therefore, gasoline is cheaper at the present time than it would have been under the Conservatives.

The hon. member could have used not only the actual figures in the Conservative budget, but she could have also used some headlines. She referred to headlines. I will go further than headlines. I will go to actual statements. These statements were the ones made by the Conservative minister of finance during the election campaign. She talked about it during the election campaign, and this is a statement which was made on January 15 in an exclusive interview in the *Montreal Gazette*. This is what the minister of finance at the time had to say after the budget increase:

A re-elected Conservative government might have to push Alberta oil prices even higher than previously planned, because world oil prices are rising faster than expected, says Finance Minister John Crosbie.

Here is the quote:

"I believe after the election a new budget certainly will have to take account of the fact that energy prices have moved worse even than we had thought when we were getting the budget ready in November and late December" . . . "This certainly will have to be assessed as to whether there have to be any revenue