

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): No, no—that come before a Cabinet—that question invites me to break—

Mr. Broadbent: I know the answer now.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): —asks me to break those rules. The socialist Party have shown a quite consistent contempt for the rules of this House, but I don't want to encourage them in it.

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ENERGY

PROPOSED PURCHASE OF DOME PETROLEUM BY AMOCO
CANADA—BIDDERS' AGREEMENT

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has said many times that in the agreement between Amoco Canada and Dome Petroleum there is the right for other potential bidders to make bids as long as Dome Petroleum does not solicit the bids.

However, at least one of the potential bidders and I think as many as four, including Amoco, have signed confidentiality agreements in order to obtain evaluation material.

One of the requirements of this confidentiality agreement is that a bidder cannot make a bid until the bid has the prior approval of Dome Petroleum.

How can we have other bids when under the confidentiality agreement Dome Petroleum must give prior approval to the bids, but that is soliciting, and under the memorandum of agreement Dome Petroleum cannot solicit other bids?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I have nothing further to add to the response that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has given. I think he has been quite clear. Dome may not solicit competing offers but certainly has to consider them if they are presented.

Mr. MacLellan: It is continually not coming to grips with the question.

MINISTER OF CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS—MEETING
WITH AMOCO CANADA REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister another question. On May 12 he said, relating to the agreement between Dome and Amoco, "they are in a position to make a decision", referring to the shareholders, and "when it is made and the proposal is presented to the Government of Canada, it will be examined in the normal course as it relates to Investment Canada, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and all other mechanisms in place for that purpose".

Why did the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, in light of what the Deputy Prime Minister has said and in light of the comments of the Minister of Energy that this is now in the private sector until it comes to Investment Canada, meet with representatives of Amoco Canada?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): I don't know, Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member is suggesting that elected representatives of the Calgary area are not free to meet with people in the energy sector.

I mean, what is this country coming to? When is a Member of Parliament not able to represent the interests of his constituents by meeting representatives of an energy sector which is very vital and very important?

If the Hon. Member is suggesting that because I may represent a farming district or I might be a farmer myself I cannot take an interest in farm problems, then we are really heading down a slippery slope to chaos in this country.

REASON FOR MEETING WITH MINISTER

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I have a question on this matter for the Deputy Prime Minister, and I ask him: Let's not be naive about this matter.

The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs said yesterday that he had met with Amoco, senior executives of Amoco, on the Dome takeover. If it is government policy that the Government has a hands-off approach in this deal, why is it necessary for Amoco to come and lobby the Government, and why is it necessary for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and perhaps other Ministers, to meet with Amoco?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. McDermid: Just stand up and make your charges.

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the co-operation of all Hon. Members at the moment to keep their remarks to themselves.

The Chair is in a difficult position, and I know that the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway understands that, as does the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys. Also I want Hon. Members to understand clearly the difficulty the Chair is in, and I want the public to understand it, because this is a place where vigorous free speech must be defended.

My difficulty is that yesterday, on a matter raised by the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway, questions which the Chair allowed, a question of privilege has been raised by the Hon. Minister. There was an extensive discussion with respect to whether or not the question asked of the Minister yesterday was appropriate or had indeed infringed against the privileges of the Minister, and some Members went on to suggest that it had gone further than that.