

Oral Questions

CONTINUATION OF PRACTICE

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. In view of the fact that Canadians and Parliament have no knowledge of how this deal was worked, can the Minister tell us whether this type of billion dollar give-away is going to go on and on and on?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, it is going to go on and on and on, just as will the improvement in Canadian economic conditions.

REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Chairman of the Finance Committee with respect to the current business of his committee. Will he schedule meetings immediately to hear the Minister of Finance and other relevant Ministers and officials on the Olympia & York-Gulf tax deal in the context of studying the many documents tabled in the House and, therefore, permanently referred to his committee for consideration? I ask this question in view of the fact that he expressed his interest in holding such hearings in a television interview yesterday.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. I would be delighted to call a meeting of the steering committee of the Finance Committee after we complete our current concerns with the Green Paper.

I might say in passing that it would be good to have the finance critic of the Liberal Party at a steering committee meeting.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Once in a while.

Mr. Blenkarn: Indeed, it would be good to have Liberal Party members in attendance at meetings more often.

I would be delighted to look into the matter along with the other many matters which are permanently referred to the committee.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Chairman for his forthright answer. His ministerial colleagues could learn something from him.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST THAT STEERING COMMITTEE BE CONVENED

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Chairman of the Finance Committee if he will undertake to call a steering committee meeting next week in order to schedule the hearings in question to take place within the next 10 days. I can assure him that if he does that there will be Liberals at the steering committee meeting, and certainly at the committee hearings.

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, I would be delighted to do that. Indeed, I will be meeting with the Finance Committee on Tuesday for a meeting which has been called for 9.30, again at 3.30, and again at 8.00 p.m. It will probably meet on Wednesday afternoon for the whole afternoon, and Wednesday evening, perhaps for the whole evening. We will get together. I am sure that the Liberal finance critic and the New Democratic Party finance critic can get together with the other members of the steering committee and myself and we can come up with a new proposal—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Blenkarn: I would certainly hope that I will have the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I was afraid that answer might go on as long as the meetings.

● (1130)

REQUEST THAT LEGISLATION BE AMENDED

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Finance. It is not her responsibility that we have a tax system which is riddled with loopholes for large corporations to make these rip-offs of the ordinary taxpayer. But is the Minister prepared here in the House today to make a commitment to the Canadian people that this kind of escape hatch for large corporations and wealthy people will be closed, in order to prevent this kind of thing in the future?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I think I have answered this question before. The commitment of this Government is to create jobs in this country and to create growth in future economic conditions. If my friend had read the report today of the Economic Council of Canada, he would have seen that the projections under this Government over the next two or three years are better than they have been in a decade.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, clearly the Minister has had too much practice in not answering questions in the bank debate.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Let me ask the Minister again if she really believes that the continued existence of this kind of law, which permits \$1 billion in tax revenue to escape from the Canadian people, makes sense to the ordinary person in this country? Or is it not simply a rip-off for the corporate sector which is impossible to justify?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, what I believe is that this Government is committed to creating jobs. We have done that and will continue to do so throughout the economic and financial policies we have introduced. I think that that is what the Canadian people want from us. They want jobs and they want growth.