

sents a means by which Canadians as a whole will have a greater level of ownership in Canadian oil and gas resources.

As to lands where exploration expenditures have already been incurred, the federal government has in a very real sense paid for much of those by means of special fiscal treatments. It now wants a stake for itself in those rights.

I trust this information answers all of the honourable senator's questions.

**Senator Frith:** Honourable senators, that completes the list of delayed answers given me by Senator Olson.

● (2130)

## BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

### CONDUCT OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Hon. Robert Muir:** Honourable senators, I would like to thank the Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate for the answer he gave to my question, on behalf of the Minister of State for Economic Development. At the same time, I raise the point that he mentioned something which could possibly be termed, by some people, a snide comment with regard to our conduct concerning Question Period in this chamber.

I say, with all due deference to him, honourable senators, and to Senator Roblin and His Honour the Speaker, for whom I have the greatest regard, that I thought we were here to represent the different regions of our country as well as the country in general. When I raise a question on behalf of people who are being thrown on the streets and put out of employment I do not think I am out of order, and, therefore, I do not apologize to anyone.

**Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, in the first place I certainly had no intention of making a snide remark, nor any suggestion collateral to the one I was in fact making. I do not think there can be any dispute at all that a question of the type just described by Senator Muir is perfectly in order during Question Period.

I thought we were all agreeing that when a subject is raised in Question Period and tends to develop into a debate, while it is not out of order necessarily, it may be more appropriately dealt with in another part of the day's business. My suggestion was not that such discussion should be limited, but simply that the subject in question may be one upon which honourable senators who are so interested in it may think that we should have an inquiry on it. Far from limiting discussion of the matter, such an inquiry would broaden its scope.

Senator Muir said that he would not apologize. If I have created the impression that I was saying something snide, or that I was criticizing him for asking a question in Question Period, then I apologize to him. I had no such intention.

**Hon. Sidney L. Buckwold:** Honourable senators, as the one who raised the point of order, I certainly want to say to

Senator Muir that the point of order was not with regard to the matter raised in the question, which was a very timely one, and one that needed to be considered. I was in fact referring to rule 32, which says very clearly:

A debate shall not be in order on an oral question, but brief explanatory remarks may be made by the senator making the interrogation and by the senator answering the same. Observations upon any such answer shall not be allowed.

That is the rule, and quite properly, I think, we are pretty elastic in the way we interpret it. I think that today a question really turned into a major debate—and a very good debate it was, too. My only point in raising the point of order was that in my view it would have been proper to deal with it more fully under a different item on the agenda. I felt that it was not really a debatable item in the Question Period; that is all.

**Senator Muir:** Perhaps I can make one slight comment. I appreciate the remarks of Senator Buckwold, and I think he is very wise in making them. If he will check the record tomorrow, however, he will note that I did say that there was some nitpicking going on apart from the question actually being asked, and he will also see that Senator Riley, Senator Phillips, Senator Rowe and myself were all dealing with different questions pertaining to the Canadian National Railways. I think we will solve the difficulty very satisfactorily, as the Leader of the Government in the Senate has agreed, and as I think everyone agrees, by having the principals appear before the Standing Senate Committee on Transportation and Communications.

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators will, of course, understand that there are many times when I feel like intervening, but refrain from doing so. I do think, however, that we can achieve our objectives just as well by following the rules. In this case, for example, the Standing Senate Committee on Transportation and Communications does not have the right to study anything which is not referred to it by the Senate. This is provided for by rule 67. It may be said that the Standing Senate Committee on Transportation and Communications should deal with this matter, but there was no motion to that effect before the Senate.

I am not blaming Senator Muir, because I think the subject raised by him and the others is a very important one. I am trying, however, to see whether we can, according to the rules, proceed with the matter in orderly fashion without wasting any time. It is now a quarter to ten, and we have not reached Orders of the Day. My intention, as I say, is not to blame anyone, but we do have rules, and honourable senators may find them very helpful from the point of view of saving time, and perhaps providing the opportunity for a more satisfactory discussion.