

● (1200)

ENERGY**PETROLEUM INCENTIVE PROGRAM—REQUEST FOR REPLACEMENT**

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. There has been a serious down turn in frontier and offshore exploration. The Province of Nova Scotia, and the Canadian Petroleum Association among others have called for a replacement of the Petroleum Incentive Program by November 1. Will the Petroleum Incentive Program be replaced by November 1?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources I would like to advise the Hon. Member that she and I have had a number of discussions on this matter. She is also carrying on discussions with the provinces to try to arrive at a satisfactory resolution to this matter.

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POINTS OF ORDER**REQUEST FOR TABLING OF DOCUMENTS BY MINISTER**

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to seek your intervention and require that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Fraser) be asked to table the documents that he used this morning in answer to my colleague, the Hon. Member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly).

Citation 327 at page 115 of *Beauchesne* states:

A Minister of the Crown is not at liberty to read or quote from a despatch or other state paper not before the House, unless he be prepared to lay it upon the Table.

I would contend that today not only did the Minister in fact make reference but he used that reference to attempt to leave the impression with the House of Commons and the public of Canada that the suggestions being made by my colleague were wrong, and that he used both documents—which he referred to specifically—to influence the course of events in the House of Commons.

I clearly recognize the problem that exists with this citation. I have dealt with the matter a number of times in the past and I appreciate that subsection 5 of Citation 327 states:

To be cited, a document must be quoted or specifically used to influence debate.

I also appreciate that there have times in the past when the very narrow definition of "debate" has been used to defeat a request such as the one I am making. However, I suggest that there is an ongoing concern in the land and there is no actual debate within the definition as set out in the orders under which we operate. However, in order to shore up his position, the Minister indicated to the House that he based his decision on those two documents.

Point of Order—Mr. Deans

Notwithstanding the fact that the debate, as quite narrowly defined, is not currently under way and perhaps never will take place, if the Minister believes that the documents he has cited or quoted from are important for the purpose of making his case, I would ask that, as the Standing Order is frequently used, he volunteer to table them.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a brief comment on the point of order just raised. I am sure that it will be argued that debate in the sense contemplated by Speakers' rulings in the past does not include the Question Period. I would urge your honour to consider two points. First, there is wide ongoing debate about this matter throughout the country and surely the House of Commons represents the country at large. Second, and more important, surely there was debate in the House during this Question Period on the matter of these two documents because representatives of the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party both stated, in their questions a few minutes ago, that the Minister decided to release the rancid tuna in question before the Productivity Council of New Brunswick completed its tests, based on a report or statements of the Productivity Council. In his reply, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Fraser) has denied or contradicted the assertions in the questions by spokesmen on behalf of the Liberals and the New Democrats. Surely, if that is not debate in a very definite sense of the term, then I do not know what it is. I respectfully submit that we have had a debate on this matter in the Question Period, at least today, and therefore the point of order should be sustained.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) raises a point of order on the basis that a citation has been made. Potentially, there is a second issue concerning whether a debate is occurring. However, there have been many precedents concerning the necessity to table a document that has been quoted during Question Period. Let us resolve that issue. I believe the Hon. Member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) was referring to a ruling by Speaker Jerome in which he indicated that a Member could not simply ask a Minister if he quoted a document and, receiving an affirmative answer, therefore force him to table it. That would be unfair.

I listened to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. Fraser). I heard him quote dates. I did not hear him quote from a document. However, as is my custom on such matters, I shall reserve, read the blues and come back later.

I remind Hon. Members—particularly the Member for Hamilton Mountain—that it has been our custom to require Ministers to table the document only where clearly there have been quotations read from that document.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I think you may want to consider an additional procedural question here. I believe that your initial observations are right on. They are in accordance with the traditional rulings of the Speaker. I would say the same if I were sitting on the other side of the House.