

Oral Questions

I have stated in the House the other day that I had offered the provinces, under certain circumstances and according to a certain agenda, to hold a federal-provincial conference with provincial ministers of communications. I am pleased to be able to announce that the provincial ministers of communications have endorsed the agenda. We have reached an agreement, and the conference will be held on May 13. To conclude, a third point, Mr. Speaker: there is no conflict between the Broadcasting Act and the hearings the CRTC wants to hold. Indeed, it is under the Broadcasting Act and on its own right that the CRTC has planned those hearings. It is because the Broadcasting Act takes into account the exclusive federal jurisdiction over broadcasting in general and on cable diffusion in particular. As for the negotiations or discussions we must have with provinces, they will not deal with jurisdictional transfers, but could lead to agreements under which the provinces' point of view on communications problems could be better respected.

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● (1420)

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION**ALLEGED FAILURE OF CORPORATION TO INCLUDE ALL FRENCH CANADIANS IN ST-JEAN-BAPTISTE CELEBRATIONS**

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Communications.

The minister has just stated that there will be meetings and consultations in June concerning radio broadcasting. Also in June, French Canadians in Quebec will honour their patron saint, Saint-Jean-Baptiste. We have just received a leaflet entitled *Québec Fête* and signed by Mrs. Lise Payette. Is the minister aware that Mrs. Payette is announcing now that, to really make something out of the June 24 celebrations, she will invite sport and TV stars, as well as political personalities both at the municipal and provincial levels, to take the first turn. Time will show. However, Mr. Speaker, my question is this: Will the minister allow a small organization which claims that there are French Canadians in Quebec and nowhere else in Canada, to use the CBC broadcasting facilities? Mr. Speaker, it is about time the minister take a stand and state here and now, as I hope he will, that the federal government will not let this Montreal gang dictate its actions.

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, the only reply I can make to the hon. member is that it is about time he realized, after some two and a half years, that I am no longer the Secretary of State.

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[English]

FINANCE**SUGGESTED EARLIER DATE THAN END OF MAY FOR BUDGET**

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. Given the fact that in the discussions that are taking place currently between

[Mr. Pelletier (Hochelaga).]

the first ministers and the Prime Minister about the price of oil and gas it is clear that one of the major stumbling blocks is the tax regime that was created and the budget brought down by the federal government last fall, is the government prepared to revise its timetable and introduce the federal budget earlier than on the proposed end of May date that has been put forward so far?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): I have no reason to think that my colleague would wish to change that date. I believe that it is important that the budget be well prepared and take into account a thorough review of economic conditions and prospects. I see no reason to change that date on the basis of the suggestion made by my hon. friend.

Mr. Gillies: Again, Mr. Speaker, to the Acting Prime Minister—

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Témiscamingue seeks to rise on a question of privilege or on a point of order. The rules adopted by the House and which came into effect this week require that questions of privilege and points of order be postponed till three o'clock. I shall recognize him for his question of privilege or point of order at three o'clock this afternoon.

[English]

ALLEGED INABILITY OF PROVINCES TO AGREE ON NEW OIL PRICE UNTIL BUDGET INTRODUCED

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Given the fact that several first ministers, and particularly the premier of the province of Alberta, have already stated that it would be very difficult for that province to come to any kind of satisfactory agreement with respect to prices until the new budget is down, is the Acting Prime Minister therefore saying today that the federal government is taking the position that no agreement is necessary until after the end of May?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think it would greatly facilitate a decision in this matter if the House could proceed as quickly as possible with the Petroleum Administration Act which would give the government the necessary authority to deal with prices of oil and gas.

Mr. Gillies: Is the Acting Prime Minister therefore saying that the federal government has given up any hopes of arriving at an agreement without going to the bill to which he is now referring?

Mr. Sharp: No, Mr. Speaker, but I think the hon. member will recall that the premier of Ontario felt that it might be desirable to have that bill passed as quickly as possible and urged upon this House, and particularly upon his own party, the desirability of such action.