

Oral Questions

Hon. Member speak out against the Minister of Energy of his own Government?

REQUEST FOR TAX REDUCTION

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, it was that Member who asked for a reduction in taxes. Why did he increase taxes 58 per cent last year?

If high gasoline prices were a crime, he would be charged as an accomplice.

Will the Minister move to reduce taxes and give us a fair and equitable gasoline price?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member likes to use these big percentage figures. It was 2 cents a litre—2.1 cents to be quite precise, that we increased gasoline taxes.

Mr. Rompkey: There is another tax.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Yes, there is another tax that is coming on in due course.

I ask the Hon. Member to think why that is so. The reason is that we were left with a \$35 billion deficit which was rising—

An Hon. Member: You have other options.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): If the Hon. Member would just listen to the answer to his question.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): If we can get this deficit down—

Some Hon. Members: Come on!

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, please.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): If we can get this deficit down, all consumers will benefit because we will have lower interest rates. That is the direction in which the Government is going. If the previous Government had not left us with that huge deficit, we would not have to be doing these things to get the deficit down.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Energy. She will know when in opposition on a number of occasions she and her colleagues, through motions and speeches in the House and

policy statements, made a pledge to the people of Canada to reduce taxes on gasoline to promote tourism. Now that the Member is in government, why has she changed her mind? In opposition she said taxes on gasoline must be reduced to assist tourism. Now in government she increases taxes. Why did she change her policy? Why did the Government change its policy?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, this Government has done more for consumers in deregulating the oil and gas industry so consumers can experience price decreases. Under the National Energy Program, remember, prices went up 80 per cent.

The Minister of Finance has already answered the question about the requirement to keep taxes on, namely, it was to deal with the horrendous deficit for which we all have to pay.

EXPO 86

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I suspect that the Government knew what the deficit was before it took power.

Considering Expo 86 is about to open, and knowing that American tourists once they fill up in Canada are not going to travel throughout Canada, will the Minister explain once again why the position on gas taxes is different when the Tories are in government than what they had pledged to the people of Canada when in opposition?

● (1130)

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I think that question has been answered adequately by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Deans: You are the only one who does.

Miss Carney: When he is so concerned about Expo, may I point out that prices of gasoline, net of taxes, are actually down in Vancouver.

Mr. Waddell: That is absolute nonsense.

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[Translation]

SPACE WEAPONRY

UNITED STATES STRATEGIC DEFENCE INITIATIVE—CANADIAN POSITION

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence.

In view of the new statement made by the General Secretary of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gorbachev, is the Government planning to make another proposal and to put pressure on the American Government so that the main obstacle to achieving rapid progress in nuclear disarmament, namely the Star Wars