

*Oral Questions*

critical fashion. They have pointed out the difficulties that the F-18A is undergoing. We had our chief of the project office down there two weeks ago. There are five or six areas, some of which were mentioned by the hon. member, of real concern. We are confident that in four out of the five, corrective action is being taken. There is one other area that we are more concerned about, and we will be reporting back on it later.

**Mr. Buchanan:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to hear that the Minister of National Defence is also on the receiving list for the reports. The reports seem to indicate that they are having considerable difficulty in keeping the F-16 in the air, and are having even more difficulty in getting the F-18A off the ground. As the minister indicated, the report pointed out that there are structural faults with this aircraft which may well entail some major redesign. There are problems with late delivery of the sub-systems, and many other difficulties.

In light of these difficulties, will the minister indicate to this House that any decision relating to this aircraft and to the choice between the two aircraft will be delayed until there has been a full and complete investigation of these allegations, and the concerns that have been expressed in this House have been allayed?

**Mr. McKinnon:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to tell the hon. member that the cost overruns are not one of our serious concerns. The contract that we will have to sign with either company will cover us against cost overruns. They are going to be in fixed 1977 dollars. The report will be studied in great detail. We will not take any precipitative action until we are satisfied that the problems they are having are only the normal problems that any plane manufacturer has when putting a new plane into production.

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**CONSUMER AFFAIRS****INCREASED OIL PRICES—STEPS TO PREVENT GOUGING OF CANADIANS**

**Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Last week, Imperial Oil raised the price of gasoline to their dealers by the equivalent of eight cents a gallon. This week they have directed their retailers to increase immediately gasoline by 20 cents a gallon at the pumps, for a total of a 28-cent increase. Diesel fuel has gone up by 35 cents per gallon in the last week and a half. An excise tax official in the Department of Finance informed my office this morning that an oil company has the right to set the price at whatever they feel the market will bear.

Is the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs monitoring this situation in order to prevent Canadians from being gouged by much higher than necessary prices, and also to protect individual service station and outlet operators from being criticized simply because they have no choice but to charge the price that has been dictated to them by the oil

[Mr. McKinnon.]

companies, the latter of whom were obviously supported by the present government in last Tuesday night's budget?

**Hon. Allan Lawrence (Solicitor General and Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs monitors price increases only from the aspect that there may be a conspiracy to restrict trade or to restrict competition.

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● (1440)

[Translation]

**THE BUDGET****INQUIRY AS TO PROGRAMS FOR QUEBEC**

**Mr. Fabien Roy (Beauce):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the hon. Minister of Finance.

Yesterday, in reply to a question from the hon. member for Cape Breton Highlands-Canso, the Minister of Finance spoke of the effect of higher energy prices and also of programs for the maritimes and Newfoundland. We are also aware of the spin-offs on central and western Canada. As the minister said nothing of projects for Quebec, I was wondering whether that was just an oversight or whether the minister simply had nothing to announce for Quebec.

[English]

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I must apologize to the hon. gentleman that I cannot answer him in his native tongue but, as hon. members know, I am a bit clumsy in that language. There are many things in the budget that will benefit the people of Quebec. For example, 30.3 per cent of the energy tax credit will go to the people of Quebec yet they have 26.7 per cent of the population, and 81.5 per cent of the people of Quebec will benefit from the energy tax credit.

In addition, we have rectified a wrong imposed on the taxpayers of Quebec by the government which preceded us. I refer to page 68 of the budget papers. We are going to make a refundable Quebec abatement. We are going to assist Quebec taxpayers, those with low incomes who presently lose the benefit of the existing 16.5 per cent Quebec abatement. From now on they will be paid the amount of that abatement. This is to rectify the injustice done to the taxpayers of Quebec by hon. gentlemen opposite during the past five or six years.

[Translation]

**INQUIRY WHETHER AMOUNTS RECEIVED BY QUEBEC WILL BE USED FOR PROJECTS IN THE PROVINCE**

**Mr. Fabien Roy (Beauce):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to tell the minister that he does not need to apologize for not using my mother tongue. Besides, he made a commendable effort in the House and I congratulate him on it. But I must