

*Oral Questions*

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I would go again to the words I used in the House—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: What are the names?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I protest the attempt by the Leader of the Opposition to twist in this way.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): The fact of the matter is that we took the House and the country into our confidence as to what the maximum exposure would be for Canadians if the *force majeure* clause were exercised. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will not try to mislead the House and the country in any other way.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the Leader of the Opposition, then the hon. member for York South, and then the hon. member for Témiscamingue.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, if the minister did not indicate to the House yesterday that some international oil companies had indicated to the government they were going to invoke the *force majeure* clause in their contracts and the minister's officials had advised him that they were apparently within their rights in doing this and he could do nothing about it, if he will tell me that he did not say yesterday that there was actual anticipation of the invocation of the *force majeure* clause in the contracts, I will certainly withdraw any questions I have asked him today.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I think *Hansard* speaks for itself in this regard and I will rest on the words I used yesterday, not on those the hon. gentleman used.

Mr. Stanfield: The minister should resign.

Mr. Alexander: You have been destroyed, Don.

SOURCE OF ESTIMATE OF POSSIBLE SHORTFALL IN OIL DELIVERIES FROM NON-ARAB COUNTRIES—POSSIBILITY OF REALIZATION

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I say to the minister that *Hansard* does not answer the questions asked and that he cannot hide behind the words in *Hansard*. I want to ask the minister, following up what the Leader of the Opposition asked, whether the suggestion that there would be a 125,000 barrel a day shortfall from suppliers in countries other than Arab countries was a calculation made in the office of the advisory committee or in the office of his department, or was it an estimate

[Mr. Stanfield.]

based on inquiries made from Canadian companies under contract with the supplying companies?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, I will stand by the words in *Hansard*, which indicate what I just suggested. I also remind the hon. gentleman that I indicated the figures were arrived at by the technical liaison committee, which I have described several times in the House as made up of representatives of my department, of the National Energy Board and of the Canadian refining companies. This is the estimate arrived at by the technical experts on all sides.

Mr. Stanfield: I don't believe it.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister whether, as one would expect a responsible minister to do, he asked for the details of these estimates made by this committee? Presumably he studied those details, because if he did not I cannot understand how he functions. Did he see the working papers on which those estimates were based and did the working papers contain any information as to the companies or amounts involved with respect to each of the companies?

● (1440)

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Obviously, Mr. Speaker, I would not examine the working papers of the committee. I think I am entitled to accept the judgment of my advisers in this regard who have been in liaison with the industry, and I do so.

Mr. Lewis: The minister is emphasizing that all he did was to give an estimate of the worst situation that could occur. Is he now able to inform the House and the people of Canada, particularly those east of the Ottawa valley, whether he has reason to expect that this worst estimate will be realized or even any part of it, or can he now say it will not happen because of the fact he has no knowledge of any reduction due to action under the *force majeure* clause in the contracts of the supplying companies?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I really cannot respond to that because it depends on the extent to which the Arab embargo is continued, the extent to which it is applied to one or another of the other countries and the extent to which different suppliers to Canada might be affected by it. I cannot give that estimate. I repeat, the over-all estimate about the down-side is the figure I gave in my speech the other day.

Mr. Lewis: I think I understand a little about a *force majeure* clause. Has the minister looked at any of the clauses and is he suggesting to the House that the mere fact a supplying company may not have enough supplies to deal with all its customers entitles it under any such clause to breach a contract with a company in Canada? Is that what the minister is saying?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, it depends very much on the clause entered into in this industry between suppliers and customers. I have not, of course, examined the *force majeure* clause—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!