

*Oral Questions*

accusation the now silent Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs was making outside the House. The Acting Prime Minister yesterday said he had been told by his colleague that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs was speaking about one incident. The press reports are very clear that the minister is quoted as speaking in the plural. I should like to direct a question either to the Solicitor General or the Prime Minister, whoever is informed on the matter, as to what exactly the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs said outside the House relative to his responsibilities as Solicitor General. Did he make the charge that information had been withheld from him on one occasion only or did he make the charge that there had been information withheld from him on more than one occasion?

**Hon. Francis Fox (Solicitor General):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition would do well to read what was said. As I read it myself, I think the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs did not indicate that he had been deceived but that he had asked for some information. Information had been given to him and he thought perhaps more information could have been given to him at that time.

**Mr. Clark:** A supplementary question. The precise language, to remind the Solicitor General who is forced to represent in this House a man who will not speak for himself, was, "It seems that they did withhold information from me and from other Solicitors General." In other words, that this was not an isolated practice. Is it the position of the Solicitor General of Canada that that was in fact what the minister said, that the minister was referring to a practice of withholding information or that he was referring to simply one instance of withholding information? Was it plural or was it singular? Do we believe what the minister said outside the House or do we believe what the Acting Prime Minister said inside the House?

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Speaker, there is no practice of withholding information from Solicitors General within the RCMP.

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, we are in a very difficult situation in this House. The man who made these accusations against the RCMP outside the House will not say anything inside the House. We are told the only person to whom we can direct questions is the Solicitor General. The Solicitor General will not answer the very simple question as to what his colleague said. What accusations did his colleague level against the RCMP Police? Did he say that they withheld information from him on one occasion or did he say there was a practice in the RCMP of withholding information from a series of Solicitors General, singular or plural?

**Mr. Fox:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is quite clear that there is no accusation that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police at any point deceived any Solicitor General inasmuch as the way that word is normally used. I think if one talks about deception one talks about wilfully, knowingly, withholding information that one knows ought to be brought forward.

[Mr. Clark.]

**GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION****POSSIBILITY OF HOLDING INCREASE IN EXPENDITURES TO SIX PER CENT**

**Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In his October 20 statement the Minister of Finance indicated that he hopes there will be a wage ceiling of six per cent next year. Earlier this morning he reasserted his belief that inflation in fact will only be six per cent next year. Would the Prime Minister indicate if his government is willing to hold its own expenditures to a six per cent ceiling next year?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we have, as was visible when the President of the Treasury Board tabled the supplementary estimates some days ago, followed on our undertaking to bring down the percentage of GNP which was accounted for by federal budgetary measures. We have been successful in the past three years and we hope to be successful in the future, in spite of the incessant demands of the opposition for the government to spend more money.

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. To hold the six per cent ceiling next year would require no further spending increases beyond \$2.7 billion. Would the Prime Minister give the House that assurance that spending increases for fiscal 1979 will not exceed that amount over the current estimates for this year?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, we never made that commitment. I think if the hon. member reflects a little bit he will see it would be a commitment very difficult to make and to keep. It is probably not desirable in a time when the country, and even the opposition parties, are asking us to inject more money, more spending power in order to increase consumer demand and to create more jobs across the country.

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**FINANCE****CEILINGS ON GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND WAGES—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION**

**Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe):** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance who this morning indicated that if the wage earner finds himself a little poorer because of inflation being higher than six per cent, that is just too bad. Would the minister indicate if he has two standards, one to apply with respect to ceilings in government spending and another to the average wage earner in this country?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to answer the question. We have more than probably 70 per cent of the budget, or a very big amount of the budget which is taken up with transfer payments to individuals, the provinces and so on. In order to achieve that target we would have to cut a lot of those programs that have been voted by the House of Commons and there would be an outcry from