

[English]

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has gone back to a refrain that we have heard in these halls many times. I can only answer him by saying once again to date we do not have a would-be purchaser with money in hand indicating that he has a deal he would like us to accept. The Hon. Member's question is dealing with a hypothetical situation and I cannot answer it.

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FINANCE

FEDERAL TAX ON GASOLINE

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Last September the Government raised the tax on gasoline, and again this month the Government raised the tax on gasoline. It is due to go up again. Why is it that a trucker in British Columbia has to pay 80 cents more per gallon than a trucker in Washington? Why is it that western farmers will pay \$84 million more this year because of the increase in federal taxes? Will the Minister move to end pricing gas by federal taxes?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, when the Hon. Member is speaking to the trucker to whom he has referred, perhaps he should tell him why it was that under the NEP gasoline prices went up 80 per cent, and gasoline prices, since we took office in September, 1984—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): World prices are going down. We are not getting it.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The Leader of the Opposition is—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Go ahead.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): It's still my turn.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The Leader of the Opposition has said that prices are going down now. If the National Energy Program had stayed in place, prices would still be going up since they were being set by arbitrary decree of Government. Under the deregulation program which was brought in by the Government last June, prices are designed to reflect the market-place. However, the Hon. Member knows that a period of time amounting to approximately two months will be needed to allow the crude oil to go through the pipeline to the refineries and to the consumer.

Oral Questions

● (1425)

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): How are the American prices now?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The Leader of the Opposition has learned—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):—and he agrees with exactly what—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Supplementary question.

REQUEST THAT TAX BE REDUCED

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, it is the Minister's turn now. I wish to read to him a question he asked in the House on June 3, 1981, in which he stated:

The world price of oil has been level over the last four months, and it looks as if it will be going down... Surely this means that there is less need for a tax increase—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Rompkey: That was his question then and it is his turn now.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Rompkey: Will the Minister guarantee that there will be a tax increase—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deans: A decrease!

Mr. Rompkey: Will the Minister guarantee that there will be a tax decrease—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Make up your mind.

Mr. Rompkey:—and now that he has signed the Western Accord and the Atlantic Accord will he sign a consumer accord?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, since September, 1984, the price of gasoline in Toronto, if I can use my own town as an example, has gone up 6.5 per cent from 45.2 cents a litre to 48.2 cents a litre during the roughly 14 months that we have been in office. That is a great deal less than the 80 per cent which the National Energy Program decreed the price of gasoline would go up under the previous Government. No one on this side of the House needs any lessons in gasoline pricing from the Liberal Party after that record.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!