

Oral Questions

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): A little more fear mongering from members of the NDP.

Let us put this in perspective. We have debated privatization in this House on a number of occasions.

Mr. Shields: And they say the same thing every time.

Mr. Mazankowski: It is really unfortunate that the NDP do not get their act together. They talk about intellectual honesty. We have another nice little quote here by the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway. One of these days the NDP are going to have to stand up and be counted. They cannot be all things to all people. This is what the Hon. Member said about privatization on February 13, 1987, as reported at page 3426 of *Hansard*:

I wish to reiterate what I have stated. I do not think that all companies need to remain in the public sector. There could be room for privatization. The argument has to be made, and the onus is upon the Government. It has to tell us whether it is a practical reason.

We have told you that this is a practical reason.

Some Hon. Members: What is the reason?

Mr. Crosbie: That's the way, Waddell. We want Waddell!

Mr. Mulroney: Why would a good man like that lose his seat?

Mr. Mazankowski: Give him a seat in Alberta.

Some Hon. Members: What is the reason?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake has the floor.

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EXCISE TAX ACT**FARM FUEL REBATE—ALLEGED DELAY IN PASSING BILL C-117**

Mr. John Gormley (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Finance. I understand that Bill C-117, presently stalled by the opposition Parties, provides an additional rebate of one cent a litre on farm fuels for farmers across the country. As they are doing the spring seeding now, could the Minister tell us if a delay in passing the Bill will mean farmers will be delayed in collecting their much needed rebates?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his very pertinent question. The Government of Canada has rebated sales and excise taxes to farmers in the past. This is worth \$200 million a year to the farmers and we want to do it again through Bill C-117. The sooner we can pass it, the better. Until we do, the farmers will not get their rebates. So I urge the Liberals and NDP to pass the Bill as soon as possible.

[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**QUERY WHETHER PRIME MINISTER WILL ASK SASKATCHEWAN PREMIER TO WITHDRAW BILL 2**

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. I understand that he will travel tomorrow to Western Canada and will probably meet the Saskatchewan Premier, Mr. Grant Devine. In view of the reaction of several groups to the fundamental issue before us, Bill 2 and the impact it may have had on national unity, would the Prime Minister be prepared to stand up in his place today and tell us that he will ask Mr. Devine to withdraw his Bill?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I hope to meet the Saskatchewan Premier tomorrow and have discussions with him to advance this difficult but so very important issue for Canada and Saskatchewan. Accordingly, I intend to discuss the matter with him tomorrow and I will report with pleasure to my hon. friend here in the House as soon as possible.

NON-NEGOTIABLE RIGHTS

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): I have a question for the Prime Minister. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we were told that negotiations were in progress between the Federal Government and the Saskatchewan authorities. I trust the Prime Minister will agree with me that basic and vested rights are not negotiable. We have in Canada a national policy on official languages and it is out of the question to negotiate existing vested rights. I ask the Prime Minister to repeat . . .

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gauthier: . . . and tell Mr. Devine on behalf of the Canadian people that basic rights such as those he tried to set back with Bill 2 are not negotiable and must be maintained.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): In fact, I have already indicated to my hon. friend that I fully share his views. There are no differences between the Hon. Member and myself. I have already emphasized the fact that in 1982, I think, the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier had felt it necessary to vote against the last constitutional initiative because in his view some of the Ontario Francophones' rights were not protected.

Problems exist in Ontario, in Saskatchewan and elsewhere and it is our duty to try to build a society which better respects the rights of linguistic minorities wherever they exist, whether it be the Anglophones in Quebec or the Francophones in Manitoba or elsewhere. That is, I think, the objective of the Parliament of Canada and it is certainly my own objective.