

Monday morning. Surely the Prime Minister can answer that question now, and he ought to.

An Hon. Member: Yes or no.

An Hon. Member: The whole truth.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that it is not the practice of this Government, or any other Government, to say these are the various things that were discussed in a confidential meeting.

An Hon. Member: That is outrageous.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): What is important is the decision that was taken by the Government—

Mr. Frith: You misled the House on Monday.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —is well known to the Hon. Member and to other Hon. Members. That decision was based on the range of information we had at the time. It was based on the results of discussions that we had had both with officials as well as the banking community. It was the best decision we could have taken based on the information that was available.

REQUEST THAT MINISTERS APPEAR BEFORE ESTEY COMMISSION

Mr. George Baker (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, this country deserves—

An Hon. Member: A question.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baker: —a thorough explanation of the Government's decision to bail out a bank against the advice of the Minister responsible, the Minister of State for Finance, who says she will not answer any questions concerning the matter while the Commission is having its hearings.

My question, in her absence, is directed to the Minister of Finance. Will he and the Minister of State for Finance appear before the Commission and explain how they can defend, in Parliament, a decision of the Prime Minister with which the Minister of State for Finance did not agree?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the preamble, as well as the question itself, are totally false. When the Hon. Member has a question that is sound in substance, then we will answer the question.

An Hon. Member: What are you hiding, Mike?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

GOVERNMENT DECISION

Mr. George Baker (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, on September 17 in this Chamber the Prime Minister said:

Oral Questions

The Leader of the Opposition makes statements like: "The Prime Minister didn't know the facts".

The Prime Minister knew all of the facts available at the time.

My supplementary question is for the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance. Is the Minister of Finance saying in the House today that the Prime Minister made a bad decision because he did not have the facts available at that time? Is that what he is saying?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me advise the Hon. Member that the information available to us was the information we needed to make the decision. That decision was made by the Government. That decision stands.

I do not quite understand what the Hon. Member is trying to get at with the misleading things he is putting into the preamble to his question.

● (1430)

[Translation]

SITUATION OF CANADIAN COMMERCIAL BANK—INFORMATION GIVEN BY BANK INSPECTOR

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. Everyone knows by now that bank auditors examined the Canadian Commercial Bank loan portfolio on Sunday March 24 and discovered that the amount outstanding was \$100 million more than what the Government had thought.

My question is this, Mr. Speaker: Had the bank auditors conveyed that information to the Prime Minister and the Government when the Prime Minister made his decision on Monday, March 25?

● (1430)

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether there are any rules in the House, but that is exactly the question which was asked a little earlier in this Question Period and was asked on two or three occasions last week. I could give the Hon. Member the same answer, but I do not want to take up the time of the House. The answer which I gave last week and earlier today still stands.

[Translation]

ORIGIN OF INFORMATION RECEIVED BY MINISTER

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I asked a very direct question. Did the Government, did the Minister of Finance have that information from the Inspector General of Banks when it was decided to give \$250 million to the Canadian Commercial Bank?