Madam Speaker: Order, please. I think the hon. member would have some interest in rephrasing that question. He knows one cannot say that someone has intentionally tried to mislead the House.

An hon. Member: He said "either," "or".

Mr. Domm: Madam Speaker, the minister is unintentionally misleading this House. The fact of the matter is that Husky Oil qualifies its commitment for investment and growth in the future by saying, "if the energy policy was to change." Since the minister shows no evidence whatsoever of changing the energy policy, in view of the recent cuts in oil production in the west, and in view of the lack of revenue because of the Lalonde levy, as it is often referred to, will the minister advise this House whether he intends to offset this loss of revenue to cover the subsidy for imported oil by any other means than the one which is not working, and that is the Lalonde levy?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, I will try to reply to the hon. member in French since he seems to have difficulty understanding English. Again I must repeat that several changes have been made to the National Energy Program so as to take into account the peculiar hardships which certain sectors of the industry may have been facing, and that those changes have been translated into sizeable improvements for that industry.

I am still holding discussions with the government of Saskatchewan, where Husky Oil Ltd. has major investments, with a view to concluding an agreement with the province under which Husky Oil Ltd. in particular and other companies operating in Saskatchewan will benefit from considerable incentives to pursue their objectives. As indicated by Husky Oil Ltd., one of several problems is the very high royalty rate levied by the Saskatchewan government. As a whole, however, the over-all parameters and the general trends that have been set in our National Energy Program are part and parcel of government policy, and we are convinced that once again they will enable Canada's petroleum industry to achieve all the objectives we expect from it in the coming years.

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● (1425)

[*English*]

CORPORATE AFFAIRS

IMPERIAL OIL CORPORATION—QUERY RESPECTING TAX DEDUCTIBILITY OF ADVERTISING EXPENSES

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. Newspapers across Canada are today carrying full-page ads by the Imperial Oil Corporation, and I show one example to the minister here. The ads challenge the 12-year study which accumulated evidence demonstrating the oil companies have ripped off some $12 billion from Canadian consumers.

Would the minister confirm that these ads constitute another rip-off of the Canadian consumer, because they are deductible items from expenses the corporation can file, and therefore have to be made up by other Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. member would not want me to second-guess the conclusions he has drawn.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, just for once we do not want second-guessing. We would like a straight answer from the Liberal minister. That is what we would like.

An hon. Member: Lots of luck.

Mr. Broadbent: The minister did not give us a straight answer because he knows that the ads can be deducted from the expenses.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Criminal seduction.

Mr. Broadbent: Which means the people of Canada are being seduced by these companies. I would like to ask the minister, while making it clear that Imperial Oil or any other company should have the right to advertise, does he not agree that political advertising of this kind should not be underwritten by the taxpayers of Canada but should be paid completely and solely by the companies themselves?

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, I am rather enjoying the hon. member's effort to convey a point of view in question period but, as he knows, I do not engage in the kind of propaganda outburst that he is exploiting at the moment.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, the minister runs a close second to that of the Secretary of State for External Affairs in not engaging in anything in the real world of politics.

PRICING PRACTICES OF OIL COMPANIES—CALL FOR ROLLBACK TO COMPENSATE CONSUMERS

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Over a week ago this admirable minister, this outspoken advocate for consumers in Canada, said that he would investigate the 5-cent a gallon increase the oil companies piggybacked on March 1 onto other increases in the price of oil. Considering that after eight years of studying corporate rip-offs by the oil companies showing they took at least $12 billion more from Canadian consumers than they ought to have taken, and the only thing the government has done has been to set up another two-year study, would he, at least in the case of these rip-offs that came over a week ago, announce today that some justice is going to be restored to Canadian consumers by