

Mr. Stevens: There is no over-all suggestion that Statistics Canada is not still the credible institution that it has been for many decades.

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that the President of the Treasury Board has actually gone to visit the premises, but he should know that the material can be delivered directly to his office.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Johnston: My question to the President of the Treasury Board is, would it not be appropriate to appoint a special committee of this House to examine the circumstances of Statistics Canada and remove this question of doubt once and for all?

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, I will certainly take that suggestion—I think it is a representation—of the hon. member into consideration. I felt that the first task of our new government was to get a good in-House view of what is, in fact, the situation with respect to Statistics Canada. I have been meeting with various officials and I intend to have more meetings. If it would be helpful to have a committee review the situation, then certainly I will consider it.

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ENERGY

FUTURE RANGE OF OIL PRICES

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister. I believe he said in his press conference this morning that the federal government and the Alberta government had an agreement on, to use his words, the range of price increases in oil.

Could the Prime Minister confirm for the House that the increase will be at least \$4 per barrel this coming year, which in our view will mean serious unemployment and a recessionary economy? If so, can the Prime Minister tell us—in his calm, honest and slightly Mackenzie King way—why it is necessary to bring this hardship down upon the Canadian people; and would he tell us what specific measures he proposes to introduce to cushion this increase to the average person?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there are some insults that are just too excessive.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): You will not be around as long as he was, Joe.

Mr. Lefebvre: You could do worse, Joe.

Mr. Clark: I would like to assure the House and the hon. member that there is no agreement in terms of any final resolution even on a range, although my conversations with various provinces—including, importantly, the producing prov-

ince of Alberta—have given me a view as to the range within which we can find some agreement. I am not in a position to indicate exactly what that agreement will be.

I am in a position to say that it will be the stand of this government that there should be an increase, because if there is no increase we will be leaving Canada in a position of reliance in the future upon offshore resources that are very unstable.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, I apologize if I insulted the Prime Minister, but at least it is better than being called, as the previous prime minister was, a reader of Machiavelli.

Mr. Lalonde: At least he read.

Mr. Waddell: The Conservative treasurer of Ontario, Mr. Frank Miller, said yesterday that the federal government and the Alberta government could not be trusted with increased oil revenues until, to use his words, “an agreement on redistribution of oil money is worked out”; and he doubted the ability of the governments to get the increase in oil prices back into the consumers’ pockets.

Would the Prime Minister tell me whether or not he disagrees with the treasurer of Ontario and, if so, what are the specific measures which he will propose? The Americans have proposed, as I understand it, an excess tax on the multinational oil companies.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I have not seen Mr. Miller’s statement so I cannot comment specifically on what he is alleged to have said. We are concerned about two aspects of any energy price increase and intend to act on them, although I cannot tell the House at this stage exactly how we will do that because that has not been decided.

One aspect which concerns us very much would be to avoid the creation of excessive profits for the oil companies. We have a proposal that we will be discussing with the premiers, and which we will probably bring into place, that will ensure that significant portions of that money help to enlarge the proportion of Canadian investment in Canadian energy development, while leaving enough operating capital for existing oil companies to carry on the expansion of Canadian supply.

Secondly, having regard to Canadians who will be particularly—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question begs a lengthy answer and I can understand the Prime Minister’s attempt to give one, but I think I have to cut it off in the interest of other members.

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CN MARINE

PROPOSED MOVE FROM MONCTON TO HALIFAX

Mr. Gary F. McCauley (Moncton): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Transport who is