

*Oral Questions*

[English]

**THE BUDGET**

## INQUIRY WHETHER NATURAL GAS EXPORTS TAX WILL BE IMPOSED

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Madam Speaker, I would like to return to the matter of the budget which was raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, because it affects my constituents right in their pocket books.

My question is to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and concerns the proposed energy export tax which we on this side of the House firmly oppose. I wonder if the minister is aware that the National Energy Board's own figures show that the export tax would fall four and a half times heavier on western gas exports than, say, other exports such as electricity, and therefore is discriminatory against one area of the country.

**Mr. Andre:** Since when have you cared?

**Mr. Waddell:** Madam Speaker, I do not have to take lectures from the Conservatives in this area.

**Mr. Clark:** What about Ed Broadbent and his sweetheart deals?

**Mr. Waddell:** Just be quiet and listen to my question.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Waddell:** In light of the delicate political situation in the west, which the minister must understand, and in light of the fact that there is a gas bubble in the United States—they are not taking all our gas now—why is the minister's government stubbornly, and stupidly in my view, going ahead with this proposed export tax?

**Mr. Malone:** I heard a bubble.

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Madam Speaker, I regret that my hon. friend has been subjected to abuse by the hon. member for Calgary Centre, but we on this side of the House are used to that from the hon. member.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

● (1150)

**Mr. Lalonde:** My hon. friend has been speculating on the content of the budget. I suggest to my hon. friend that he wait for the budget and then he will be able to reach his own conclusions. I have indicated previously that the government was concerned to ensure that there would be fairness in our energy policy which will be announced. I hope that when the hon. member looks at it, he will find it to be a fair policy for all Canadians, including western Canadians.

**Mr. Waddell:** I thank the minister and I should like to tell him that I take lots of abuse from my colleagues to the right, but I would like to have some answers from him. He can stand up and just deny that he will bring in the tax. Let me suggest to him—and I wish he would respond to this—that a government like his government can get hooked on a tax like this because they will crave more and more of the revenues. The National Energy Board is now talking about a new pricing formula so that we can lower the price of gas and sell more to the United States. Will the minister stand in his place now and rule out the possibility of the Government of Canada decreasing the price of Canadian gas in the U.S. market?

**Mr. Lalonde:** Madam Speaker, I think it would be rather foolhardy while the National Energy Board is proceeding with a review of the situation and having consultations with the provincial governments concerned and the industry to prejudge any of the recommendations that may come out of this study. We will see what the recommendations are and those recommendations will be made public. I am sure there will be an opportunity to discuss them and the government will take a decision if specific changes are recommended.

I can tell the hon. member that at the present time I am not considering changes to the existing formula. However, if there are improvements that are necessary, I think it would be stupid on the part of the government not to wait for those recommendations.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**

## ALLEGATIONS OF WIRETAPPING

**Mr. Henri Tousignant (Témiscamingue):** Madam Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Solicitor General of Canada. In view of information released by CBC this morning alleging that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has wiretapped the legislature of British Columbia, is the minister aware of that incident and if so what does he intend to do?

**Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General):** Madam Speaker, I can say that the policy I follow is this: first, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police obeys the law. What the RCMP did in this case and in the case of the Yukon, is that it appeared before the courts each time to secure a warrant. Second, it respects the privileges of all legislatures and those of the Canadian Parliament as well. The problem is to know which privileges have to be respected in the various legislatures. It is not always clear. In the case mentioned by the hon. member, it was discovered later on, after a committee meeting, what were the privileges of that legislature. So I sent a letter to all speakers across the country to ask them or their legislatures what privileges they wanted the RCMP to respect. When they send me their answers, I can assure the House that we will