

*Oral Questions*

whose responsibility is to develop our resources are in a sound financial situation and are busy developing them.

[English]

INSTRUCTIONS ALLEGEDLY GIVEN TO DOME PETROLEUM  
CHAIRMAN

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the same Minister. Mr. Macdonald, the Chairman of Dome Petroleum, told me before the weekend—

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

**Mr. Broadbent:** That is very funny to Conservative Members.

The Chairman of Dome Petroleum told me before the weekend that the Government of Canada instructed him not to make contact with Petro-Canada.

Will the Minister confirm that that was the case? Could he tell us why a position which could inevitably put more pressure on to losing this important asset to a foreign-owned corporation should be one encouraged by the Government of Canada, of all people?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** First, Mr. Speaker, I welcome the question of the New Democratic Party leader and I will be glad to answer him. But I should also like him to give consideration to Lafontaine's fable *La mouche et le coche*.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Dome question we stated clearly to Mr. Macdonald, and in public because there has never been anything confidential in this field, that the Government was seeking a solution through the private sector. This position was expressed to Mr. Macdonald at the appropriate time a few months ago already, and it was publicly expressed by the Minister of Finance and by the Minister of Energy.

We have been seeking a solution through the private sector and, after two and a half years of work, three offers have now been made to Dome Petroleum. As I see it, in that sense the Government has helped Dome Petroleum pull through the difficult situation in which it had been put by the Liberal Party.

● (1425)

[English]

ROLE OF PETRO-CANADA

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** That is an extraordinary situation, Mr. Speaker. Considering that the Government as well as himself, I believe, and certainly his predecessor, have said that they wanted Petro-Canada to operate at an arm's length relationship, not to be interfered with on a day-to-day or on a regular basis by the Government of Canada, why was it that the Government not only told Dome it could not talk to Petro-Canada but stopped Petro-Canada from making a

decision that might have been in its commercial interest and in the interests of Canada by getting directly involved in the Dome purchase?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, there again the situation is quite clear and quite public. The Government has asked Petro-Canada to act on a commercial basis. It is obvious that in a situation such as this Petro-Canada, a Crown corporation, would not have acted within the scope of the private sector had we been forced, through the Department of Finance—

[English]

—we assure a bail-out of the Dome situation. That is what we do not want to have.

PROPOSED PURCHASE BY MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, it is by no means at all obvious that Petro-Canada would not have acted in its interests and in the interests of Canada if the Conservative Government had not stopped it. That is the issue.

Does the Minister think that it is an appropriate position for the Government of Canada to take to stop our publicly-owned Canadian corporation from getting involved if it means almost certainly that the oil company in question is going to end up being owned by a United States multinational? Why is the Government on the side of a multinational and going against the interests of Canada? That is what I want to know.

[Translation]

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition makes propositions like these he ought to have the intellectual integrity to present both aspects of the proposition. It is easy for him to say that Petro-Canada should intervene. As far as commercial operations go, we agree, that is the mandate it was given and I never interfered with its commercial operations. But in a situation like this where Petro-Canada would have needed billions of dollars, the Leader of the Opposition must first tell us where these billions of dollars would be coming from.

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THE CONSTITUTION

DISTINCT CHARACTER OF QUEBEC—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides):** Since we are going to have a debate tonight on the Dome Petroleum issue, Mr. Speaker, we will have an opportunity to develop this further. I should like now to direct a question to the Prime Minister of Canada concerning the constitutional discussions which are scheduled to be held this week at Meech Lake.