

Oral Questions

Committee, the committee chaired by the Minister's seatmate, is paralysed. Could he give us that additional information?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the only problem we are having on this side is reconciling the conflict between the statements made by Members opposite before they were in opposition and the statements they are making now. That is the puzzle with which we are faced, and that is the puzzle with which all Canadians are faced. Get your act together, boys, before—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The simple answer to the question that the Hon. Member has posed is that work on the committee headed by my seatmate, the Deputy Prime Minister, is moving along expeditiously and making good judgments and good decisions. The Hon. Member will see some of the results of those decisions in a very short period of time.

TIMING OF INTRODUCTION OF BUDGET

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has said that we will see the results of those decisions in a very short period of time. Before interests rates shoot up, or before the now called "Brian-buck" makes the "Diefen-dollar" look like pure gold, would the Minister tell us when he intends to remove this uncertainty, confusion, and incoherence by bringing in a Budget? Will he confirm that it will be before the end of February?

• (1430)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have already said that it would be in the latter part of February.

An Hon. Member: What day?

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ENERGY

PRICE OF GASOLINE—MINISTER'S TELEX TO OIL COMPANIES

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It is reported that yesterday the Minister of Energy telexed the major oil companies regarding oil prices. Recognizing that this month alone the price of Canada crude oil has dropped from \$37 a barrel to \$30 a barrel, which is the equivalent of six cents per litre at the pump, did the Minister in her telex tell those oil companies that she expected a minimum six cent per litre drop in the price at the pump?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have already told the House that I communicated with the oil companies to say that this Govern-

ment expects, of course, that any cost decreases will be passed on to consumers.

An Hon. Member: When?

Miss Carney: As the Hon. Member well knows, for me to order a company to make a specific price decrease would contravene combines legislation. I can no more order a company to lower the price of oil than I can order a company to lower the price of an automobile in Oshawa.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deans: We'll get to that.

OIL COMPANIES' PROFITS

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, by way of a supplementary question, does the Minister recognize that the reduction from \$37 a barrel to \$30 a barrel, without an equivalent decrease at the pump, means a \$5 million per day windfall profit for those oil companies every single day that that is left in effect? Does she think that it is appropriate that they should be allowed to rip off the Canadian consumer at the rate of \$5 million a day while she sits and complains that she has no power?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member's arithmetic is totally amazing. How can the oil companies derive a benefit of that amount of money when, in fact, that oil has not even moved into the system?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson).

Mr. Deans: Supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): One short supplementary question.

Mr. Deans: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My supplementaries are always short.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER INSTRUCT PETRO-CANADA TO
REDUCE PRICES

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to talk to the Minister about how it happens; but let me ask her this.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: How what happens?

Mr. Deans: Does she not remember that the same oil companies which she now says should be left to let oil work its way through the system were found guilty by the Restrictive