

Oral Questions

sion which in the case of price increases would have the power to roll such increases back if they were proved to be unjustified. The hon. member has not gone very much beyond that suggestion. He has not described any of the villains which he sees in the market at the present time. The hon. member ought to know, as I know and as every other hon. member of this House and every citizen knows, that the main upward pressure on prices at the present time is from increased energy prices and increased food prices. These are the two main driving forces behind inflation.

I ask the hon. member, is he suggesting that we give authority to a fair prices commission to establish energy prices in Canada such as, for example, the price of energy flowing from Saskatchewan, or does he believe that the fair prices commission should have the authority to set firm prices? I am sure that, on reflection, he would reject both suggestions, whereupon what would be left for the fair prices commission?

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, I wish that we were permitted half the time to raise questions that ministers are permitted to answer these questions. I would like to deal with what the minister has suggested. Considering the fact that in recent years oil companies have been making excessive profits beyond the price which is established at the wellhead level, that a number of companies in the food chain business have been making excess profits, that a number of banks in Canada have had record profits amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars—ripping off Canadian consumers—there are indeed lots of corporate villains out there if the Government of Canada did want to act and establish a fair prices commission in this country.

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, that does not sound very much like a question. I would remind the hon. member that if he sees villains, he might reflect on the fact that, as a share of the gross national product, the proportion going to profits—

Mr. Broadbent: Profits are up over wages.

Mr. MacEachen: —has been down over the last two years. They may increase in 1981, but the hon. member has not provided the basis for his allegation as it relates to the experience of the recent past.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL
TRADE AND INDUSTRY OF JAPAN

Madam Speaker: I would like to draw hon. members' attention to the presence in our gallery of Mr. Rokusuke Tanaka, the Minister of International Trade and Industry of Japan.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

INQUIRY WHETHER CANADIAN DRILLING IN UNITED STATES
MONITORED

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. As the result of the minister's October 28 national energy policy, virtually every single one of the Canadian independent oil companies, which incidentally have traditionally been responsible for 70 per cent of the exploratory wells drilled in Canada, is expanding tremendously its U.S. exploration budget at the expense of its Canadian budget. Private estimates of the funds involved range from \$1 billion to \$4.5 billion in 1981 alone. Will the minister tell the House whether he is monitoring this situation and if he has an estimate of how many dollars in the budgets of these Canadian-owned companies will be allocated to U.S. exploration? Can he say what figure his monitoring has produced?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, in reply to the hon. member I must tell him that we do not now have the kind of audit system he is suggesting. It is extremely difficult to arrive at those figures before some time has elapsed, after months or even at least a year. For the time being those are tentative figures and must be taken with a grain of salt. As suggested earlier, the Leader of the Opposition refers to 40,000 jobs, but the association which put that figure forward had to backtrack and qualify by saying that the job figure referred to was hypothetical and had no basis whatever in fact. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association themselves had to state they had no proof at this point that jobs had been lost in Canadian industry because of the announcement of the National Energy Program.

● (1440)

[English]

Mr. Andre: Madam Speaker, the minister seems to be the only one in Canada who is not aware that rigs are leaving this country and that millions of dollars are going along with them to finance exploration in the United States, to the point where American banks are advertising in Canadian newspapers, inviting firms to do business with them as this money, equipment and people go down there.

My question to the minister is, how many rigs are involved? There are estimates of 200 rigs leaving this year if they can find enough trucks to carry them. How many billions of dollars is the minister prepared to see leave Canada for the United States, which will be a great boon to their oil and gas industry? They are delighted and are running columns in the financial magazines saying "Thank you, Canada". How far is the minister prepared to see this go before he will take reparative action and amend substantially—or hopefully, as the Royal Bank suggested, withdraw—this national energy policy which is proving to be such a disaster not to Alberta