

Oral Questions

tions. The rules have not changed except for the requirement of a training component so that the people who are involved in these projects have a better opportunity than they had in the past of acquiring a permanent job when they finish.

* * *

ENERGY

PRICE OF GASOLINE IN ATLANTIC PROVINCES

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Today in the Atlantic provinces a litre of gasoline can be as high as 75 cents. Mr. Speaker, that is higher than the Canadian dollar and, unlike the Canadian dollar, gas prices are going up.

Does the Minister realize how crippling this is for a worker who puts gas in his pickup truck, or for a fisherman who puts gas in his outboard motor? Will she move now to roll back that increasing spiral so that workers in the Atlantic provinces can earn a decent living?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, as I have already informed the House in response to similar questions last week, Canadians buy more than gasoline when they fill up their tanks at the gas stations. They are paying for social services such as old age pensions—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss Carney:—and for post secondary education. They are paying for the whole range of social services that Canadians have indicated they want to support.

Ms. Copps: They are paying the multinational oil companies their profits.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker, that answer is as valueless as gas prices are expensive.

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL ACTION

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador): Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the Minister that a logger in central Newfoundland pays 55 cents a litre for gas for his chain saw.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Just a supplementary question, please.

Mr. Rompkey: At that price it is not the trees that are getting cut down, it is the loggers.

Will the Minister establish a fair price for gasoline? That policy and others of the Government are crippling the economy of the Atlantic area.

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the Hon. Member's

rhetoric should have been saved for the time when his Party was in power. His Party increased gasoline prices 80 per cent under the NEP.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

* * *

PETRO-CANADA

REQUEST FOR RETENTION IN PUBLIC SECTOR

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Last week we were urging the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to instruct Petro-Canada to live up to its public mandate by keeping prices down to a reasonable level. She refused. Last night on the television program *Sunday Report* we learned why, when the Minister announced her intention to continue with the privatization of Petro-Canada.

Last August the Prime Minister said: "It is Conservative policy to maintain Petro-Canada". Any privatization of Petro-Canada would have the effect of destroying its public mandate and making it a profit maximizer just like Shell or Imperial Oil. Therefore, will the Prime Minister undertake to the House to maintain Petro-Canada completely in the public sector?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, we will not give that undertaking if my hon. friend is requesting an undertaking that, forever and a day, Petro-Canada will be 100 per cent state owned. It may very well be that the national interest could best be served by issuing a part of the shares in favour of ordinary Canadians. That may very well be in the national interest and, if it is, we will proceed along those lines. However, there is no doubt that this Party is supportive of the concept of a national energy company, but one that does work on behalf of all Canadians.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, ordinary Canadians now own Petro-Canada completely. They do not need a change from that.

● (1430)

MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Considering that Petro-Canada cannot serve a broad national mandate on the one hand and be a profit maximizer on the other—which is acknowledged by the Chairman of Petro-Canada in the current annual report of that Corporation—will she admit that she refused to instruct Petro-Canada to bring down prices last week because she wants to maximize its profits in order to fatten it up to be sold off to the private sector? Will she admit that?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): No, Mr. Speaker.