

## ENERGY

## SITUATION OF QUEBEC CONSUMERS

**Mr. Robert Toupin (Terrebonne):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Over a year ago I said that the Conservative Government's shut down of the Montreal Gulf refinery would have the following consequences: first, unwarranted loss of jobs in Quebec; second, more acute underproductive capacity in Quebec; third, handouts to the multinationals and certain friends of high finance; and fourth, I said that Canadian taxpayers and Quebec consumers would pick up the tab as a result of reduced competition in Quebec. Here is my question, Mr. Speaker: the April report of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources indicates that the profits of oil companies in Montreal are twice as high as in Toronto. Does the Minister realize that Quebec consumers are now paying for the shameful action of his Government?

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to remind the Quebec leader of Canada's socialist party that in Montreal East there are now more people working in the petrochemical sector than at the time when, from the Conservative benches, he was telling us what to do.

## MINISTER'S POSITION

**Mr. Robert Toupin (Terrebonne):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources should tell that to the unemployed Gulf workers and to Quebec consumers who, as a result of Conservative mismanagement, now have to pay twice as much as Torontonians do. What concrete measure does the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources intend to take to correct this injustice towards Quebec consumers?

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I have the impression that my colleague has not visited the Montreal region for quite some time. I would be rather surprised if indeed the price of gas in Montreal were twice as high as in Toronto.

## REQUEST THAT MINISTER ISSUE INSTRUCTIONS TO PETRO-CANADA

**Mr. Robert Toupin (Terrebonne):** Mr. Speaker, first I had the pleasure of being in Montreal yesterday with some of the Gulf workers and, second, I would urge the Minister to have a look at the figures put out by his own officials. Does the Minister intend to issue clear and specific instructions so that Petro-Canada will intervene and restore healthy competition in Quebec, in the interest of all Quebec consumers?

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, we have anticipated the wishes of the Hon. Member. This Government gave Petro-Canada a mandate to operate on the market in accordance with Canadian legislation so as to promote competitiveness.

## Oral Questions

## OIL COMPANIES

## PRICE OF GASOLINE—REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF INQUIRY

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Consumer or Corporate Affairs, depending on where his interests lie. As a result of the Conservative Government's negligence and failure to act in the Gulf refinery affair in Montreal East, for which we have Mr. Toupin and Mr. Masse to thank, today we have the following situation: consumers in Quebec are paying 11 cents more for a litre of gas. The Minister said earlier in his answer to the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides that he was prepared to order an investigation if six people in Quebec asked for one. Is the Minister willing to do so, because six people have indeed written to the Investigations Commissioner to ask for an investigation? Furthermore, I am sending a letter to the Minister by messenger, right now. Considering the section in the Act that authorizes the Minister to request an investigation as well, is he prepared to acknowledge his responsibilities and defend the interests of Quebecers against the oil multinationals and to order an investigation as requested today of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs?

• (1425)

[English]

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should have been awake while I was responding to his colleague. I said the inquiry is under way. I have the letter in question. It was delivered to me by Canada Post.

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

[Translation]

**Mr. Malépart:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister's reply confirms what people have been saying since the shutdown of the Gulf refinery. What the Government is admitting today, and in fact, my colleague filed his request for an investigation several days ago, if today the Minister confirms that an investigation is being made, it just means that the truth is out and the Government was wrong.

## REQUEST THAT MINISTER PROTECT CONSUMERS

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie):** My supplementary is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Yesterday, the Automobile Protection Association condemned the attitude of Petro-Canada, which claims to take the lead in these things and works hand in glove with the Government in raising prices in the Eastern Townships and the Quebec City region. Would the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, instead of sitting there doing nothing, be prepared to pick up the phone and call the President of Petro-Canada and tell him: Sorry, but Petro-Canada has to protect the Canadian consumer; you are