

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. A number of hon. members wish to ask supplementaries on this subject. I would at this point invite hon. members, if they can, to limit the number of supplementaries. I have noticed with some unhappiness that in recent days not too many opportunities have been given to members in the back rows to participate in the question period. If the front benches of the several parties, on one side or the other of the Chair, take up most of the time in asking their questions and putting supplementaries, we know who the victims are. It is those who responded so sympathetically to my admonition. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands on a further supplementary.

Mr. Douglas: One final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister has told the House that he has been advised about the reason for these price increases. I assume he means he has been advised by the oil companies. What investigation is the government itself making with respect to these price increases in view of the fact that three oil companies within a matter of hours instituted these price increases? Is any investigation being conducted? Second, is any consideration being given to investigating this matter under the Combines Investigation Act to see if there has been any collusion in these price increases by the three major oil companies of this country?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, the advice I referred to was that of the National Energy Board. As to whether or not there may be an investigation under the Combines Investigation Act, the hon. member knows that under the law the director of investigation and research has the responsibility for doing so. I will make certain through my colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, that this matter is brought to his attention if he has not already noticed it.

GAS AND OIL RESERVES OFF EAST COAST—
ESTABLISHMENT OF GOVERNMENT BODY TO CONTROL
DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, in view of the serious situation that exists off the coast of Atlantic Canada, particularly Nova Scotia, brought about by the discovery of oil and gas reserves, will the oil companies be left to decide for themselves how these resources should be developed, at what rate, where production would be marketed and at what price, or does the government intend to establish some authority over the industry to manage both the rate and type of development that will ensue offshore?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I do not understand whether the hon. member is talking about refinery operations that might occur in Canada from foreign feed-stock or the development of offshore fields. If he is talking about the former, there is, of course, the present jurisdiction exercised by the National Energy Board under the National Energy Board Act in respect of the importation and marketing of oil products. If he is talking about the development of the offshore fields, as I mentioned to the hon. gentleman the other day there have been intensive discus-

[Mr. Douglas.]

sions between officials of this government and officials of the governments of the four Atlantic provinces and Quebec in respect of the possible mutual development of that area. I would hope that these discussions could be brought to early fruition in order that co-operative development of the offshore fields can continue.

GASOLINE AND OIL PRICE INCREASES—INQUIRY AS TO
LEGISLATION TO REDUCE TAX CONCESSIONS TO
COMPANIES

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the outrageous behaviour of the oil companies in increasing their prices and their profits, is the minister now prepared to bring in legislation to remove some of their very sizeable tax concessions?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources set out the answer to that question quite clearly.

Mr. Baldwin: You are a little more humble than he is.

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[Translation]

MANPOWER

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—CRITERIA FOR
APPROVAL OF PROJECTS

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the hon. Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

When his officers are looking into a local initiative project, must they before approving or disapproving it take into account the unemployment existing in the locality from where the project under study has been submitted?

[English]

Hon. Robert Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, one of the criteria for approval of Local Initiative projects is the degree of unemployment. Another criterion is that the people hired by the project sponsors are to be drawn first from the manpower offices in terms of those people on unemployment insurance or welfare. So the answer is yes, the degree of local or regional unemployment is a major consideration in judging these projects as to their merits.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a supplementary question.

Since the minister says that it is one of the criteria, could he tell the House what the others are which are essential to guide the civil servants when they have to take the decision to approve or disapprove such a project?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. minister might perhaps answer this question briefly, but this information should normally be supplied on motions.