

make the information available to his Department. Specifically, it will not give the evaluation of the assets acquired. Will the Minister direct Petro-Canada to make this information available to the Auditor General, since Canadian taxpayers put up the money?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, this question was raised last year, and I think it was repeated this year by the Auditor General. The process followed for the acquisition of Petrofina by Petro-Canada was within the rules as they exist in the Government. It was not an acquisition made by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. It was made by this Crown corporation which has its own system of evaluation and its own system of audit. When the President of Petro-Canada, or its chief executive, appears in front of the committee, Hon. Members of the House—as they have in the Past and will in the future—will be able to interview and ask the questions they want of them.

Miss Carney: I am glad the Minister made the point that this was the second year the Auditor General has asked for this information, and said that Petro-Canada should be accountable to Parliament.

TAX TREATMENT OF PETROFINA'S FOREIGN SHAREHOLDERS

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The Auditor General also reported that the financial arrangements made by Petro-Canada for the acquisition of Petrofina exempted the foreign shareholders of Petrofina from payment of Canadian capital gains tax. This break was not accorded the 18 per cent of shareholders who were Canadian. Is this the Government's interpretation of "Canadian benefits"?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I have not had the time to review that matter with Petro-Canada. I have asked my officials to be in touch today with Petro-Canada on this point. When I have more information, I will be able to deal with it.

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MARINE TRANSPORT

AUDITOR GENERAL'S CRITICISM OF DEPARTMENT—REQUEST FOR LEADERSHIP

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. It arises out of the report of the Auditor General this morning, and is based primarily upon his concern at the lack of a sense of urgency on the part of the Ministry with respect to problems facing it, problems which range all the way from crew manning, the entire fleet replacement program, improperly based, to lousy if not totally unacceptable analytical processes.

Oral Questions

Could the Minister make some kind of undertaking to the professionals in the service, and to those of us in this House, that he might now, since the Crow is out of the way and behind him, spend a minute or two a week looking at these very critical problems identified by the Auditor General, about which he is very much aware, but about which there has been no significant action by the Minister or his predecessor in the last three or four years? Will he interest himself in Coast Guard matters and in maritime matters? Will he undertake to imbue his departmental people in authority with a sense of leadership, which would give them a sense of urgency with respect to the resolution of the problems?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, it appears the Hon. Member has read a very different report than the one the Auditor General presented, which in fact suggested that some progress had been made by the maritime administration in addressing several of the issues that were raised in the past year. Of course we will look at and respond to the recommendations which have been put forward with the kind of dispatch we have shown in all other matters related to transportation.

It is unfortunate that the Hon. Member tried to create some kind of a distinction between the very important attention the House paid to the matter of the grain transportation Bill and the fact that we were not paying attention to the maritime area. Just last summer we announced a program of over \$700 million for the purchasing of brand new maritime ships in the Coast Guard fleet, which will go a long way toward addressing the problems of that fleet. It seems that he has conveniently ignored that very major commitment on the part of the Government.

Mr. Forrestall: When the minister gets around to reading the Auditor General's report he will become very painfully aware of his comments with respect to the improper basis on which they went ahead with the ordering of those ships. We do not know whether we need them. We do not know where to use them. We do not know how they should be manned, or how they should be scheduled.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER TAKE ACTION

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Madam Speaker, let me return to just one quotation from the Auditor General. Having identified many areas of required change, he says "its actions have not resulted in significant change". It is the significant change I am asking the Minister to address. The Auditor General identified it in part as a lack of a sense of urgency with respect to marine problems, shipbuilding problems, and crewing problems.

Will the Minister just give us a simple undertaking, a little promise that we can take away from here, that in fact he will pay some attention in the future to the extraordinary difficulties of search and rescue, scheduling, crewing, manning and unmanning of lighthouses? Will he address himself to these