

Oral Questions

I would like to suggest that in the future, when Members of the House feel they have something to say, they make every effort to ensure that their facts are straight and that those facts are presented in a fair descriptive manner. Perhaps the Hon. Member for Essex-Windsor (Mr. Langdon) who talked about a gigantic blob should have donned a diving suit so he could have learned first-hand exactly what he was talking about for a change, and then spread that news.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[*Translation*]

INDUSTRY**QUEBEC OIL REFINING CAPACITY**

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post.

Yesterday, the Minister and his colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, made contradictory statements about the oil refining capacity in Quebec. One of them should look at a map of the province.

Mr. Speaker, my question is as follows: Does the Minister intend to publish the O'Farrell Report forthwith, and I am referring to the report on the independent study made by the Director of Combines Investigations? Furthermore, is he going to insist that his colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, immediately table evidence supporting these figures so that Canadians will know which of the two Ministers they are supposed to believe?

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I can give my hon. friend the assurance that there is absolutely no question of contradiction or controversy on this side of the House. In fact, we have a director responsible for the Combines Investigation Act who, acting independently and autonomously, has examined the legality of the Gulf-Ultramar transaction. His recommendations and comments have already been made public, which is what I did as soon as I received the report.

I think it is clear the problem has been quite adequately assessed by the Director.

INQUIRY WHY MINISTER APPROVED SALE OF GULF TO
ULTRAMAR

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my next question is for the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion.

Yesterday, the Minister said that the purchase of the Gulf refinery by Ultramar would create 4,500 person-years in Quebec. However, a spokesman for Ultramar, a Mr. William Barrie, immediately stated the exact opposite when he said, and I quote: "We do not expect any new jobs."

I would therefore ask the Minister to inform the House exactly why, in the circumstances, he approved the sale of the refinery to Ultramar.

[*English*]

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition undoubtedly knows, under the legislation empowering Investment Canada to pass this type of transaction we are asked to consider six different criteria. As we weighed the various aspects and evidence that fell under those six criteria, we felt that there was a net benefit to Canada to be gained from the purchase by Ultramar.

I know the Leader of the Opposition hates to refer to jobs being created, but the number of jobs to which he has referred is a figure that comes from the \$125 million that Ultramar has agreed to spend. It is estimated that those funds will, in both a direct and indirect sense, create 4,500 person-years of employment over a three-year period. That is the type of jobs to which I was referring yesterday.

GOVERNMENT POSITION ON TRANSACTION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, under the circumstances I believe I am obliged to ask the Prime Minister a question. The Prime Minister knows that one Minister has resigned over this issue. He was not here yesterday for legitimate reasons, but at that time three Ministers were conducting a three-ring circus of contradiction.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

• (1420)

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Conservative Member for Duvernay said the deal "stinks". So would the Prime Minister tell us why his Government agreed to this particular sale and to the closing of the refinery in Montreal?

[*Translation*]

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I agree we should consider the facts when dealing with a problem as serious as the one raised by my hon. friend.

Texaco in Montreal closed its doors in September 1982: 420 jobs lost and total silence on the part of the Liberal Caucus. BP Canada closed its doors nine months later: 190 jobs lost, and total silence on the part of the Liberal Caucus. Esso Canada closed its doors four months after that: 470 jobs lost, and still no reaction from the Liberal Caucus. In the last fifteen months, 137,000 new jobs have been created in Quebec, compared with only 37,000 in 55 months by the hypocrites in the Liberal Party.