

The previous Liberal government did not have a program of incentives to encourage the expansion of oil storage facilities. However, inasmuch as there has existed since the mid-1970s substantial excess refinery capacity in eastern Canada, and in particular in the Atlantic provinces, there has also been some under-utilization of available crude oil tankage. Given the increasing cost of crude oil and the financial costs involved in carrying stocks above working requirements, oil companies will generally only store enough crude to meet prospective refinery runs even though additional tankage may exist.

Discussions with some oil companies and terminal operators earlier this year indicated that some surplus tankage existed in the Montreal and Quebec City areas. However, it is possible that in building heating oil inventories for this winter some of this tankage has subsequently been utilized.

The federal government is now in the process of examining the need to build a Canadian strategic petroleum reserve. In this context it is reviewing both the possibility of using any surplus above-ground tankage that might be available as well as underground storage options.

MULTICULTURALISM

CANADIAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL ON MULTICULTURALISM AS SOURCE OF ADVICE

Senator Flynn: I should like to respond to a query raised by Senator Bosa when he asked what mechanism the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism (CCCM) will employ to report directly to Parliament should it perceive that the government is not following the advice it has been given.

The minister has advised me that, while the terms of reference for the CCCM have been revised to allow the council to bring to the attention of the public matters it deems to be important, the primary function of the CCCM continues to be to provide a source of consultation to the government directly through the Minister of State for Multiculturalism. It is the understanding of the minister that it is not the normal practice for bodies which are advisory to ministers to report directly to Parliament. Moreover, the minister advises me that he will continue the practice of tabling the annual reports of the council.

EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION

REFUGEES FROM INDOCHINA—REDUCTION IN GOVERNMENT SPONSORSHIP

Senator Flynn: Honourable senators, on Thursday last, December 6, Senator Thériault asked a question with respect to refugees. I had elaborated, for the benefit of honourable senators, upon the changes made to the government's refugee sponsorship program. Senator Thériault wondered if those changes had been motivated by increased pressure on the part of those opposed to the refugee program.

I would like to reassure Senator Thériault that the new approach has nothing whatsoever to do with any negative opinions which may have been expressed by a very small

minority of Canadians towards the refugee program. In fact, the overwhelmingly positive response of individual Canadians to the desperate plight of Southeast Asian refugees has encouraged the government, while maintaining the commitment to 50,000 refugees before the end of 1980, to divert funds which the government would have expended on bringing refugees to Canada to providing additional medical and food aid to the refugees remaining in Southeast Asia.

All honourable senators will appreciate that while Canada's effort in sponsoring refugees is second to none, our country can absorb a certain maximum, and the humanitarian figure of 50,000 has been established. I believe that all Canadians will applaud increased assistance by our government to those hundreds of thousands of refugees who remain in Southeast Asia.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ZIMBABWE-RHODESIA—CANADIAN ROLE IN CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

Senator Flynn: Honourable senators, I have a response to the question asked by Senator Macquarrie regarding the encouraging developments in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and the possibility of Canada playing a role in the resolution of the civil war there.

General agreement has been reached on all of the elements of the settlement package for Rhodesia, and the parties involved in the Rhodesian conflict have agreed to move quickly to settle the remaining details on implementing a ceasefire. These include arrangements for the disengagement and disposition of the opposing forces and the time between the signature of the ceasefire agreement and the beginning of the ceasefire itself.

The Canadian government is pleased with the advances that have been made to date in the London talks to bring peace to Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. At the Lusaka Conference last summer, the Prime Minister indicated that Canada would be prepared to participate in some kind of force or group that would help bring about an internationally acceptable solution, namely, the eventual holding of free elections. Our talks at that time were more on the supervision and holding of elections than on participation in a military peacekeeping force. We have had discussions with the Chief Electoral Officer here in Canada on how Canadians could be brought into any activity relating to the election process, how they might be recruited and what their role might be. The question of whether we might contribute to a peacekeeping or peace-monitoring force has never been raised with us so we have been concentrating on the aspect which we discussed with Britain and officials at Lusaka, namely, that of helping in the monitoring and workings of the election process only. Should any other request come from Britain, we would have to evaluate it at that time.