

Oral Questions

ensure self-sufficiency and security of supply. Under our system, we are providing exploration incentives rather than tax incentives, for the simple reason that we want to encourage our Canadian industry to participate in the development of our resources. If the opposition were to form the Government, Canada's entire oil industry would be given back to the Americans. Our policy is to provide for Canadian participation in Canada's oil and gas industry.

[English]

OIL SANDS POTENTIAL

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, surely the Minister recognizes that it is not prudent to be spending billions of dollars of taxpayers' money on high-risk exploration when in Canada we have the oil sands, with known quantities of oil, the largest single reserve in the world.

The Minister avoided my question. How does he justify spending billions on inefficient exploration, high-risk exploration at high cost, when the same amount of dollars invested in the oil sands would create thousands of jobs across this country?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member were aware of the facts, he would know that in the last few months I have made agreements with the provinces and with industry for heavy oil projects in western Canada, and upgrading in Saskatchewan. For example, the Cold Lake project in the Hon. Member's riding is going ahead with Imperial Oil. There is the BP and Petro-Canada project at Wolf Lake. Another project by Amoco was announced a few weeks ago. Many programs are going ahead in the development of heavy oil and tar sands in western Canada. I am consulting and collaborating with the provincial Governments. We are making a lot of progress. It is possible to develop that kind of resource in western Canada and, at the same time, ensure that there is development in northern Canada, and in the eastern provinces where more activity is needed than anywhere else in the country.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

HONDURAS—REFUSAL TO SIGN UNITED NATIONS AGREEMENT ON REFUGEES

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs I would like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. Honduras, which the Secretary of State for External Affairs will visit next month, has refused to sign the United Nations Agreement on Refugees. It has detained 7,000 or 8,000 El Salvadoran refugees in a detention camp in Colmoncagua, where they are entirely supported by the United Nations and relief agencies, but harassed by the Honduran military.

Remembering that the U.S. and Honduran armies are poised to invade El Salvador through that same area, will the

Prime Minister ask his Minister to request the Honduran Government to sign the UN agreement for the protection of refugees, and to give the El Salvadoran refugees the same freedom as it gives Nicaraguan refugees in Honduras, and forbid the use of Honduras as a base for the U.S. lead invasion of El Salvador?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has requested an intervention with a foreign Government in relation to a matter that is within its jurisdiction. Canada's position in relation to the encouragement of proper treatment for refugees is well known. No country has been more open and generous in receiving political refugees than has Canada. That continues to be our position.

PLAN TO RELOCATE REFUGEES

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Prime Minister is with regard to an international obligation of Honduras to sign the agreement on refugees. It is an international obligation to give good treatment to them and not to promote war with its neighbour. Considering that the Roman Catholic Church has supported the refugees in refusing to be relocated out of their camp, will the Prime Minister ask his Minister to ask the Honduran Government not to go ahead with its plan of forced relocation, and to consult with the church and the United Nations about the refugees' request to be relocated, if necessary, to a third country, or to be repatriated to El Salvador under United Nations protection?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member will be aware that persons become political refugees eligible to apply for acceptance into Canada and many other countries when they have left their country of origin and are located in refugee status in another country. People who are in that position in Honduras, who have come from Nicaragua or El Salvador, are in a position to make application to Canada or to other countries for consideration of their case. With reference to decisions taken by the Honduras Government within its own jurisdiction, the Hon. Member will realize that the Government of Canada cannot interfere in those domestic decisions.

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[Translation]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

ALLEGED TRANSFORMATION TO RETAIL OUTLETS

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation.

The Minister seems to be well aware of the objections to which have given rise the Department of Labour's plans to transform post offices into something like general stores. I have seen, for instance, postal employees busy filling out orders while people who wanted to buy stamps had to wait in line.