

of the House to argue for or against higher energy prices. No one is arguing against their right or responsibility to do that. My question is, does he think that a man who is appointed chairman of a commission to monitor the industry in terms of its pricing and profit policies should be out advocating higher prices and profits, especially at a time when the big five in the industry had increases in their profits of 86 per cent in the past year?

[Translation]

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Oshawa is asking me to require the chairman of that commission to live in a literally fictitious world. Mr. Renouf is merely being realistic when he notes that the price of oil products will have to go up. One does not have to be a wizard to know that, reality is there for everyone to see. In his speech Mr. Renouf did not indicate that he favours higher prices, he simply and realistically noted, recognizing government policy and the policy of all governments in the world at present, that the prices of oil products will have to be raised, that it is important that the public understand and know exactly what is going on, who will profit from those increases and who will incur the costs. Such is Mr. Renouf's task in the next few years.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, the reply is not better in French. It is the same in French as in English.

● (1130)

[English]

Since we have it in his own words that he supports a biased chairman in advance, would the minister now renounce his campaign rhetoric in which he condemned the oil industry for charging too much and in which he said the Liberals would deal with exploding profits? Will he acknowledge either that that was hypocrisy, or will he change the terms of reference of this agency and give it the authority to roll back unfair price increases?

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, I am tempted to try to answer the hon. member in Latin to see whether he will understand.

Mr. Epp: Go ahead. Maybe you will make some sense.

Mr. Lalonde: Surely we should see this as proof of consistency that the statement is the same in French as it is in English.

With respect to the substance of the hon. member's question, again I challenge his interpretation of any bias in the statement made by Mr. Renouf, who is an outstanding Canadian, has chaired the Anti-Inflation Board in an outstanding way and who is performing his duty under the Inquiries Act in quite an honest and fair way. I suggest to the hon. member for Oshawa that his is not a fair statement to make about Mr. Renouf.

With respect to government policy, it is well known. We stated it during the election campaign and have repeated it

consistently since then; and I hope that when we come up with our energy program the hon. member's party will be able to support that program as being one which is good for Canadians at the present time.

GASOHOL—INQUIRY WHETHER CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO
REMOVAL OF EXCISE TAX

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the same minister, and it has to do with our well-known lack of capacity to produce liquid portable fuels in the country. I think the minister would agree that we should be encouraging the production of renewable energy, and I wonder if the minister would consider removing the 7 cents a gallon excise tax on gasohol as a measure to increase the production of renewable energy.

I also point out to the minister that, contrary to some opinions held in the country, the production of ethyl alcohol actually contributes to the total food supply and does not subtract from it. I hope the minister takes that into consideration when he answers the question.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I would like to say how much I appreciate the hon. member's interest in renewable resources. I think this is indeed a very important area. The production of renewable resources will need to be encouraged in the next decade and, as the hon. member knows, there is currently a parliamentary task force which is examining these various issues.

The specific question raised by the hon. member would more properly be decided by the Minister of Finance in a budget decision, and I would not want to comment on it further. I am sure the Minister of Finance has heard the hon. member's representation, and I wish to assure the hon. member that his representation will be considered.

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THE BUDGET

INQUIRY WHETHER EXCISE TAX ON GASOHOL WILL BE
REMOVED

Mr. Charles Mayer (Portage-Marquette): Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance. Would the Minister of Finance take into consideration the exchange which has just gone on, and will he take it upon himself in the budget to remove the seven cents a gallon excise tax on gasohol so that we may encourage production of liquid portable fuels as a means of making the country truly self-sufficient in energy?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I will consider the hon. member's representations.