

*Oral Questions*

Resources. Last week Robert Bertrand, the director of anti-combines investigations, alleged that the oil companies continued to overcharge their customers since 1973. The government accepted these allegations, but action has been postponed for two to four years because of the reference to the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the seatmate of the minister, said last week that Petro-Canada was Ottawa's "honest broker in the field to make sure that the consumer would be protected". In order that the Canadian consumer can get lower prices for gasoline and petroleum products, will Petro-Canada now be announcing lower prices to Canadians for its products?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Madam Speaker, it seems to me that the question is left hanging in mid-air. The role of Petro-Canada is to ensure that it becomes a very aggressive competitor in that sector and that it will introduce an element of even stronger competition than the market has known so far. Does this mean that in certain circumstances Petro-Canada's prices will be lower than those of its competitors? That will be decided by the marketplace on a competitive basis. So there is no question of Petro-Canada systematically following a policy under which its prices would always be lower than those of any of its competitors in the market.

[English]

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Madam Speaker, the government seems to take the position that there has been an immense rip-off, yet the one agency over which it has any direct control refuses to take any action. As a matter of fact, John Ridsdel, a spokesman for the Crown corporation, admitted that Petro-Canada's prices are the same as those of private major oil companies. He quoted the president, Wilbert Hopper, that the company is "in business to make money".

Since one of the announced priorities of Petro-Canada was a competitive price for industry and consumers, since consumers are getting a shellacking with the prices of the government—\$3.25 per barrel this year higher than it would have been under our pricing policy—and since the minister has statutory authority to instruct Petro-Canada with respect to its policies, will the minister direct Petro-Canada to lower its prices immediately to a realistic level, so that the price reduction will have an effect and consequence upon its competitors in Canada?

**Mr. Lalonde:** Madam Speaker, being very competitive is not contradictory to making money. Petro-Canada is in the field to be extremely competitive with any other company and to operate on a business basis. As far as the allegation of the hon. member is concerned, to begin with the price per barrel at the present time is lower than it would have been under the Conservative budget.

**Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton):** Not true.

**Mr. Lalonde:** I invite the hon. member to look at the facts if he wants to ensure that he is not misrepresenting the situation.

We have a report by the director of combines investigation which is before the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission. It is the report of the director after several years of investigation. The allegations contained therein will be examined by the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission, and the people against whom the allegations have been made will have an opportunity to have their say. This is the position of the government.

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## THE CONSTITUTION

### CHARTER OF RIGHTS PROVISION RESPECTING EVIDENCE

**Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice. About three weeks ago the minister stood up in the House and told members that they were paying attention to the Canadian evidence task force with respect to the charter of rights. Members will be aware of the article which appeared in *The Globe and Mail* on Monday, entitled "Americanizing Canadian Criminal Law".

In light of the fact that the Canadian evidence task force strongly recommended against going to the so-called tainted evidence rule in the United States, why does section 24 of the charter of rights not only write the tainted evidence rule into the charter but makes it obligatory on the courts to disallow any evidence which is considered to be tainted?

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development):** Madam Speaker, I am not here to reply to the questions put by members of the constitutional committee during its hearings. This question was debated at length in committee. The hon. member did not appear before the committee to ask any questions.

**Mr. Kilgour:** Madam Speaker, it is clear the minister knows as much about law as he knows about finance. Will it be his policy not to answer any questions about any aspect of the charter of rights, or is he prepared to answer seriously a question which I suggest concerns a great many Canadians?

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Chrétien:** Madam Speaker, I was present at the committee hearings. Members who appeared before the committee asked many questions about this matter. We are now at third reading stage of this proposition; we have replied to all those questions. Never has a minister been in front of a committee as long as I have been.

**Mr. Clark:** You are in the House of Commons now; answer the question.

**Mr. Chrétien:** I was in front of that committee for more than 110 hours, and I replied to all questions on all technical