

Supply

Mr. Ferguson: The hon. member for Brampton-Georgetown (Mr. McDermid) referred to a letter soliciting funds for a political party. I received one of these the other day. I get a kick out of them. A neighbour came to me with his letter and wanted an explanation of it. There are five questions, which would appear to be skill-testing questions. I asked him what he made of it? He said, "Well, I get from this that if you donate \$100, you get \$75 deducted from your income tax. If you donate \$200, you get \$150 deducted from your income tax". But he could not understand the skill-testing questions which went along with it. Apparently this man was under the impression that if you got all the questions right and made the top donation, you would be able to dine with some fat chap by the name of Mr. Mulroney. I do not know what he had in mind here. I said it was worth a try, anything can be an improvement over what we have already. But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that this income tax write-off is money which would ordinarily go into the coffers of the Government of Canada. When you see such skill-testing questions as these and realize their source, then of course we have to ask, are we wrong as a government for letting the people of Canada know what the facts are through the medium of advertising? I think not. We have heard a great deal tonight about the energy policy and some of the problems with it. But at no time did I hear the opposition stand up and tell the people of Canada that the federal government does not set retail prices. We have no jurisdiction over retail prices. The federal government establishes a price paid to refiners for their crude oil. The price, called the blended price, is now 70.5 per cent of world prices as of January, 1982. The opposition does not tell the public this. As a matter of fact, the old conventional oil is now at 54.4 per cent of world price. Is the opposition going to tell the people of Canada how much the province of Alberta and the Government of Canada offered to contribute to the Syncrude project and the guarantees they were willing to provide on the balance of the funding?

• (2150)

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): We will let you tell them.

Mr. Ferguson: I doubt if the opposition would do that. In fact, I have heard the ads about taxation on a litre of gas and I have been asked questions about this. I passed by a gas station the other day. I saw the price at 39.4 cents a litre and I went in to check. The Ontario government road tax amounted to 6.3 cents a litre. The Government of Canada's total take was 7.41 cents. Of this, 72 cents was the Canadian ownership charge which is paying for Petrofina and will be paid for in September; 2.04 cents is sales tax; 1.5 cents is excise tax and 2.79 cents is upstream corporation tax. The producing province gets 4.86 cents and the industry takes 16.87 cents of 42.9 per cent of the total. On top of that, the petroleum compensation charge is returned to the oil companies. In fact, the total to the oil companies is not one third; it is slightly over 50 per cent.

I would like to draw hon. members' attention to the statement in the annual report of Suncor by the president of the corporation. He said that after months of uncertainty we have

obtained a higher oil sands price effective January 1, 1982, and Suncor now stands on the brink of a new era of opportunity.

I hope that members of the opposition will realize the necessity of communicating these facts to the people of Canada, which is something they have failed miserably to do in their role as opposition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Regina East (Mr. de Jong) rises on a point of order.

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Speaker, is there enough time to ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member's time has expired. A question can be asked only if there is unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate having the opportunity of this extended period of time to debate this important issue. I have flown in from my constituency to be here. I have an opportunity now, for a very short period, to summarize exactly what has happened during the course of the day as I have followed it winging my way from the west to the nation's capital.

I was very interested to hear the thrust of the debate today. What the motion deals with is a very serious problem of advertising. It is a specific kind of advertising. It is advocacy advertising on the part of the government and the self-serving polls that have been put out by this government.

We are criticizing the practice that has evolved under this government. I want to give some advice to the government as I believe there is a role for a party to articulate the conventional and traditional liberalism started at the time of confederation. But under this Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and this government there has been a deterioration in those principles of liberalism that would cause Sir Wilfrid Laurier to whirl in his grave and Mackenzie King to look up or down, whatever the case may be, at this chamber in which he spent so much time, wondering what has happened to the Liberal Party which once was a proud party in this country.

In trying to be as helpful as I can to the government, I can only say that it should look at the most recent example of what has happened to the New Democratic Party government in Saskatchewan. It launched itself into a very expensive, slick advertising campaign outlining the merits of all the things that democratic socialism was going to do in the province of Saskatchewan. That government spent millions of dollars telling the people of Saskatchewan about the family of Crown corporations. The people of Saskatchewan, as have the people of Canada, asked themselves a very simple question. If things are so good according to this slick, expensive government advertising campaign, how come I cannot meet my mortgage payments? How come I cannot meet the food bill for my