

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL OF REMARKS BY LEADER OF OPPOSITION—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Mike Landers (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43. In view of the intemperate language used by the Leader of the Opposition on Wednesday last in relation to Liberal members of parliament from New Brunswick, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Middlesex-London-Lambton (Mr. Condon):

That this House urges the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw his offensive remarks and apologize to the hon. members concerned.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Presentation of such a motion for debate would require unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

NATIONALIZATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question would be for the Prime Minister if he were here, but I will direct it to the Deputy Prime Minister. In a speech on August 1, the Prime Minister stated on national television:

We will remove the intrusion of many government policies from individuals and businesses; in some cases this will mean returning functions to the private sector.

He went on to reaffirm his faith in the private sector. In the throne speech, this pledge was repeated on three or four occasions.

Can the Deputy Prime Minister explain to this House why there has been this failure on the part of the government to fulfil these commitments that were made, and why the government has taken action with regard to Nordair and, now, Pacific Petroleum directly contrary to its own stated policies?

An hon. Member: Esso is next.

An hon. Member: Have you given up the ghost?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is referring to the very significant transaction which occurred over the weekend; the acquisition by Petro-Canada of the controlling block of shares in Pacific Pet—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Oral Questions

Mr. Gillespie: This transaction is a major building block for the future energy security of Canadians—

An hon. Member: A major block in building!

Mr. Gillespie: It is a major investment in our future. It is no way inconsistent with the statements made in the Speech from the Throne which highlighted the importance of major energy investments for our future.

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, that flimflam does not deserve reply.

My follow-up question to the Deputy Prime Minister is with regard to these commitments made, I thought in sincerity, to the people of Canada on national television and again in the throne speech, that there would be no further nationalization and there would be a return to the private sector on the part of this government. Will the Deputy Prime Minister give his firm commitment that there will be no further nationalization of private companies—

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Andre: —at least until the government works up the courage to seek a renewed mandate from the people to pursue a policy of state ownership of the Canadian economy?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the hon. gentleman that there is no nationalization involved in this particular transaction.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: What do you call it?

Mr. MacEachen: I also ask him to probe more deeply beneath the surface of this transaction to discover for himself that the purchase was made entirely without government funds. It is entirely a commercial transaction. It is not drawing upon the revenue of the Government of Canada. Further to that, probably because of this strengthening of Petro-Canada it will be possible at the same time to strengthen activity in the private sector because, as the hon. member knows, virtually all the projects undertaken by Petro-Canada are joint ventures undertaken in co-operation with private sector firms.

I believe if the hon. member will probe more deeply, he will abandon this effort of his to paint this as a further incursion of the government into the private sector.

● (1417)

Mr. Andre: Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister would strengthen the private sector by having those who run the Post Office run the oil industry. If the Deputy Prime Minister is not aware, he should be aware that Petro-Can, by statute, is an agent of Her Majesty; therefore, its expenditures and debt obligations are obligations of the Government of Canada and the taxpayers of Canada. This, obviously, makes a mockery of