

Oral Questions

Mines and Resources. Wednesday, the Prime Minister announced to workers that Gaz Métropolitain had not made a serious offer. Today, the people at Gaz Métropolitain are contradicting the Prime Minister's statement and saying that they did make a serious offer and they even mentioned that they were in touch with your office. Could the Minister inform the House who is telling the truth in this matter, the Prime Minister or the people at Gaz Métropolitain?

[English]

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have already explained to the Hon. Member that the Government of Canada does not own this refinery. Therefore, offers to purchase this refinery would not be made to the Government of Canada. Offers to purchase the refinery would, of course, have been made to the owner of the refinery, which was Gulf. At no time did I or any other member of the Government receive an offer to purchase a refinery that we do not own.

[Translation]

REPRESENTATIONS CONCERNING OFFER—MINISTER'S ROLE

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister deny that her colleagues, the Conservative Members for Assomption, Duvernay and Mercier, discussed the Gulf refinery question and the 35,000 barrels with Gaz Métropolitain in her office? Does the Minister want us to believe she was not aware of the matter?

[English]

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is obviously forgetting that it was at my request that Gulf delayed the shut-down of the refinery for two months so that new buyers could come forward. This is certainly more than the Liberal Government had done for the three refineries that had closed down when the Liberal Government was in office. They refused to intervene in this way.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

UNITED STATES SPACE STATION—POSSIBLE CANADIAN PARTICIPATION

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Science and Technology. It is my understanding that the Government of Canada is to decide whether it will participate in the United States space station. I believe that not participating would be missing the boat. Will the Minister indicate when that decision will be taken?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has a memorandum of understanding with the United States in terms of active participation by Canada in the space station effort. The Cabinet is presently seized with the proposal that I have laid before it, and a decision will be made some time next month.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

REPORTED RESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Environment Canada's senior scientific adviser in Ontario, Doug Hallett, has resigned today after high level ministry criticism of him for sharing information with the public, especially via *The Journal* last week. Will the Minister request that Dr. Hallett stay on, and will he give Dr. Hallett the public vote of confidence that his dedicated work so clearly deserves?

● (1200)

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am at a distinct disadvantage in doing justice to the Hon. Member's question, because I do not have a letter of resignation from Dr. Hallett. It may well be that in the last few hours he has indicated his intentions to resign. I have no information that such a resignation is related at all to criticism of his actions, much less from me.

INVESTIGATION OF ST. CLAIR RIVER CHEMICAL CONTAMINATION

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I regret to have to inform the Minister that in fact the resignation has taken place, confirmed by his office this morning, and is tied to that criticism. Is it fair that Doug Hallett should lose his job while Dow Chemical prospers? Is it fair that communities down river from the blob should have to lose their faith in that investigation going forward with full support from the Ministry? Or will the Minister make an effort to get this key man back into the team?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I can give a categorical commitment to the Hon. Member that nobody within Environment to my knowledge—certainly not I—asked for Dr. Hallett's resignation, much less encouraged it. In my case, I have not even received it.

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CLERK OF PETITIONS' REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petitions presented by Hon. Members on Thursday, December 12, meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.