

Oral Questions

more general terms when I said that there will not be any cut-back in toxicological research, since \$27 million from my department and \$150 million from the federal government are being allocated to this research.

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, the Minister cannot say that will not be the effect. The Canadian Wildlife biotoxicology branches are being cut back. The unit in New Brunswick is being cut back, which is currently studying heavy metals in the Bay of Chaleur and the links between cancer and birth defects. If the Government and the Department of the Environment are not prepared to do that, would the Minister state to the House who will take care of the problem of safety for Canadians in connection with these important issues that she and the Conservative Party are proposing to cut back?

[Translation]

Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment): When we considered these cuts, Mr. Speaker, I agreed, along with my officials, to make very minor cuts to a number of programs, and they are very minor indeed, for we are talking here of 305 person-years out of a total of 10,000 employees; it is clear, therefore, that we are not thinking of abandoning toxicological research. I suggest that some people are dramatizing the situation somewhat, and if the health of the Canadian people were really jeopardized by cuts such as these, we would certainly review the situation and make cuts in some other less essential programs. But we do not feel that such is the case just now.

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ENERGY

GAS PRICE INCREASE—EFFECTS ON GASPÉ RESIDENTS

Mr. Charles-Eugène Marin (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Hon. Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Considering the long distances people living in the Gaspé Peninsula generally and in my own riding of Gaspé in particular must travel to obtain their basic services, and considering the 64.6 cents a litre they must now pay for no-lead gasoline, could the minister tell the House whether she has recently contacted or met her Quebec counterpart about this situation? If not, does she intend to meet her Quebec counterpart or any other official, in order to deal with this problem and roll back the price of gasoline to a level more acceptable to the Gaspé people?

[English]

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I wish to assure the Hon. Member

that I have in fact met with my Quebec counterpart. I can only tell him that the Governments, either provincial or federal, do not set the price of gasoline. In this country, which is so vast, the whole issue of the difference in gasoline prices is a real irritant, whether it is in the Yukon, Gaspé or northern Alberta.

Gasoline prices are a function, not only of the price of crude oil, but also of federal taxes, provincial taxes and competition. Even in the cities the spread between gasoline prices at the moment is something in the order of 40 cents a litre in Edmonton and 58 cents a litre in Montreal. I am aware of the concern of the Hon. Member and I certainly will meet with him to see if there are any special circumstances that we can alleviate. However, I can only repeat that gasoline prices are not set by the federal Government.

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RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

MONTREAL TAXI INDUSTRY—COMMISSION FINDINGS

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address my question to the Minister of State for Multiculturalism. During the recent election campaign, his Leader, as a major part of his Party's policy, declared in Toronto: "We will stamp out racism wherever it rears its ugly head." The Minister will surely know that the Quebec Human Rights Commission recently concluded without a doubt that racism and discrimination prevails in the Montreal taxi industry against black Canadians and members of the Haitian community. In addition, East Indian Canadians in Hamilton yesterday filed the same grievance.

My question is very straightforward. In light of the fact that this ugly head of racism has unfortunately and clearly identified itself, what specific and immediate proposals will the Minister and the Government introduce in the House of Commons to address specifically these two abusive cases which are causing economic inequalities among Canadians?

Hon. Jack Murta (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Mr. Speaker, I agree that the situation which has developed in Montreal, and also in the other part of the country to which the Hon. Member alluded, is very troublesome, as is the report which has recently been released in the Province of Quebec *vis-à-vis* the taxi industry. The Member should know that one of the jurisdictional areas in this dispute lies with the Government of Quebec. It is a provincial government matter from that point of view. However, we will be working with provincial Governments across Canada in order to help them in any way that they feel necessary to stamp out racism wherever it exists. That is a commitment which was made not only by the Prime Minister but by the entire Conservative Party. It was also a commitment which was made in the "Equality Now" report to which all Parties have agreed. We are moving to implement the recommendations of that report as quickly as possible.