

Routine Proceedings

wants and has earned, to be Canada's independent, world-class integrated oil corporation and a source of national pride.

Full details of this initiative will be contained in the legislation and will be developed in consultation with the board of Petro-Canada. I would, however, like to inform the House today of some of the more important provisions under which this initiative will proceed.

• (1530)

First, legislation will allow for the sale of all Petro-Canada shares. They will be offered in a manner to ensure broad-based participation in the ownership of the company.

Second, the board of Petro-Canada will develop an employee share ownership program as part of the initial offering.

Third, no one individual will be permitted to hold more than 10 per cent of the publicly-held shares and there will be a 25 per cent restriction on the cumulative foreign ownership of publicly-held shares.

Fourth, the Minister of Privatization will retain the government's holdings and arrange a shareholder's agreement with the company indicating the government's intention to manage its shares as an investment.

The overriding principle will be that the company will operate based on sound business objectives in the same manner as any private sector company. Under this arrangement there will clearly be an arm's length relationship between the government and the corporation.

Fifth, through either the provisions of the legislation or the articles of incorporation, Petro-Canada's headquarters will remain in Calgary and the company will continue to adhere to the Employment Equity Act. Employees of the company can be assured that Petro-Canada's policies governing salaries, pensions, benefits, relationships with the unionized workforce and official languages will be continued.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, since 1984 the government has adopted a more market-oriented approach to energy policy with the dismantling of the National Energy Program. Oil and gas markets have been deregulated, special taxes on the

oil and gas industry have been lifted and the Petroleum Incentives Program has been phased out.

[English]

The government today is empowered with all the necessary legislation it requires to provide Canadians safe and secure energy into the future.

State ownership and state control no longer makes sense in this important sector.

Petro-Canada's time has come and it has earned the right to be an independent, Canadian owned, Canadian controlled national corporation without the state in the middle.

I can only say to the company and its dedicated employees who are capable and eager to meet this challenge: "You have earned and deserve this opportunity and Petro-Canada's future has never been better. Good luck. *Bonne chance*."

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to thank the minister for giving me a copy of his statement a little earlier today so I had an opportunity to have a look at it. I guess my first question to the minister, on behalf of all of us on this side, is why. Why take this marvellous instrument of national policy which has served us so well for the last 16 years, and dismantle it?

Probably I have just answered my own question. That is probably why the government is doing it. One of the blind obsessions of this particular administration is to do away with anything, good or bad, but particularly if it is good, that reminds it of a past when we had sovereignty, when we were masters in our own house.

The minister says: "Sell the shares to Canadians". Who in this House is against motherhood? Of course, sell the shares to Canadians, but there is something redundant about all that. Why sell it to people who already own it?

Mr. Epp: When were you ever at a shareholders' meeting?

Mr. Simmons: As your Minister of Finance says, you learn a lot more if you listen.

Mr. Epp: But not from you.

Mr. Simmons: You could try. How would you know?