

Oral Questions

say, Mr. Speaker, that through our excellent simultaneous translation service I noted he deftly evaded my question.

Mr. Speaker, the credits announced are not solely for Quebec, they will benefit all Canadians. There remains a balance of \$360 million to \$375 million which the federal government will get from Quebec taxpayers. Can the Minister of Finance tell us today, yes or no, whether he is ready to guarantee that the money coming from Quebec will be used for projects in Quebec?

[*English*]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there are many other benefits I could mention. The provisions of this budget apply to the Quebec small businessman in the same way as they apply to businessmen in the rest of the provinces, and I promise that the taxpayers and the people of Quebec will be treated just as well as, or in the same way as, people in any part of Canada.

The way I look at it is this: confederation is not a question of dollars and cents; it is a question of whether we build up Canada together with the people who come from other countries, and this is what we must continue to do. We cannot measure that in dollars and cents.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PETRO-CANADA

POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF CORPORATION IN OIL REFINERY AT COME-BY-CHANCE, NEWFOUNDLAND

Mr. Fouse Faour (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Can the minister tell us whether his department has been approached by the government of Newfoundland concerning the possible involvement of Petro-Canada in the idle oil refinery at Come-By-Chance and, if so, has he instructed Petro-Canada to study the feasibility of its involvement in this project?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): There has been some communication between our two governments with respect to the refinery at Come-By-Chance. I do not recall a specific reference to Petro-Canada, but I will refresh my memory as to the correspondence and get in touch with the hon. member.

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ENERGY

STEPS TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF HOME HEATING OIL

Mr. Tom Lefebvre (Pontiac-Gatineau-Labelle): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and it relates to a question I addressed to him

on November 13 while his estimates were being considered in the House.

I asked him what his government intended to do to help alleviate the impact of the rising cost of heating by fuel oil in areas of Canada where it is not possible to switch to natural gas because it is not available. The hon. gentleman mentioned a new nozzle designed to reduce consumption of fuel oil. I understand the Canadian Standards Association has not as yet even received a proposal in connection with this device. Has the minister anything further to announce to the House to help 30 per cent of Canada's population who face this problem?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): The hon. member will recall I told him that in our energy package we are trying to bring about a substantial transfer to natural gas. This, in itself, will improve security of supply to those who stay on oil. On the conservation side we shall be taking certain very substantial initiatives. With respect to the retrofitting of oil furnaces, this will be encouraged by tax incentives. In addition, we intend to greatly expand our conservation program through CHIP. So we are taking a number of initiatives which will apply across Canada but which will have special application to those who continue to use oil-burning furnaces.

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[*Translation*]

THE BUDGET

REASON TAXI DRIVERS NOT GRANTED TEN CENTS A GALLON TAX REBATE ON GASOLINE

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Surely the minister knows that before the presentation of the budget taxi owners were entitled to a refund of 7 cents on a gallon of gas. Surely the minister is aware that if he does not change his decision, taxi owners will suffer a loss of about \$2,000 a year, and in the Montreal region alone about 700 taxi drivers will be unemployed. Could the minister tell me why he did not give taxi drivers a refund of 10 cents on a gallon of gas, as he did to farmers, commercial fishermen and public transport systems?

[*English*]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the general excise tax increase is to apply to everyone. Three exceptions have been made for certain reasons—urban mass transit, farmers and fishermen in connection with work on their farms or their fishing boats—and we cannot allow further exceptions. Taxi drivers will, of course, have to increase their fares to cover their increased costs. There is no way of avoiding this. It has happened in the United States, it has happened in England, in Germany, in Japan, in Italy, in France; we cannot avoid it. I am sorry, but I cannot give the hon. member any other answer than that.