

S.O. 21

for Disarmament that Canada would play a leading role in the search for disarmament and peace, Canada has again voted against a nuclear weapons freeze at the UN. Yesterday we were one of only 12 nations to vote no to a superpower freeze.

In recent weeks, thousands of Canadians have tried to persuade the Government to change its mind on this issue. Since Canada's "no" vote on November 20, Canadians from coast to coast have written to, and pleaded with the Government to support the UN call for a mutual, balanced, verifiable nuclear weapons freeze between the superpowers. Like the Liberals before it, the Government has ignored public opinion, public pleading, and the urgency of action to halt the nuclear arms race.

This week in the House the New Democratic Party tried to persuade the Government of the wisdom and need to support this UN effort. The Government did not listen. Instead, the Conservatives chose to take the same outdated advice, most of it emanating from the Pentagon, as the Liberals did before them. On this crucial issue of nuclear disarmament there is sadly no difference between those two old Parties, and nothing new about Canada's new Government—

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that her time has expired.

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PETRO-CANADA

RETURN ON EQUITY QUESTIONED

Mr. Paul Gagnon (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, in this day of financial restraint I rise to question the prudence of our investment of \$4.2 billion in Petro-Canada. A recent analysis of Petro-Canada shows a 1.2 per cent return on equity versus a 9.9 per cent return for similar companies. Is part of this poor earning record due to paying too much for Petrofina and BP? Consider, Mr. Speaker, that the same analysis estimates that Petro-Canada's assets are overstated by about \$2 billion. Further, I question some of its decisions.

The company has a huge inventory of unused office space in Calgary. For example, the Hanover building was rented at about \$20,000 per day, starting in April, 1982. Now, 950 days later, it is still three-quarters empty. That is a waste of about \$15 million.

The Petrofina takeover is only one portion of the question. One has to look at all operations, the takeovers, real estate, operating costs, and the management. I call for a parliamentary inquiry to ascertain if the taxpayers' investment of \$4.2 billion was a prudent investment and if the company was, and is, as well managed as similar Canadian companies.

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that his time has expired.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, now that the Government, because of strong pressures, seems to be seeing a glimmer of light in its foggy perspective of its role in the environment, and has decided to continue monitoring the effects of forest pesticides on migratory birds, the effects of toxics in the Great Lakes on the herring gull, and the migration patterns of the caribou in the north, and is also making some positive noises about keeping the interpretation centres open. I urge the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Blais-Grenier), and the Government, to acknowledge at last that the environment is important, and to rescind the shameful decision to cut down the strength of the Canadian Wildlife Service.

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WESTERN GRAIN STABILIZATION ACT

CALL FOR AMENDMENTS

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, in south-western Manitoba, as well as in Saskatchewan and Alberta, drought conditions and a grasshopper infestation have damaged or destroyed much of this year's crop. As a result, many prairie farmers are experiencing serious cash flow problems. I know my colleagues, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) and the Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board (Mr. Mayer), are well aware of these problems, and I applaud the positive steps which have been taken to date. However, Mr. Speaker, I believe that more can be done.

Since many farmers urgently need cash in order to seed next spring, I strongly urge the Government to introduce amendments to the Western Grain Stabilization Act. Farmers in my area are encouraged by recent indications that there will be a large pay-out from the stabilization fund next year. It is my belief that a significant portion of that money should be made available to prairie farmers prior to spring seeding. In addition, the Act should be amended so that the initial payments can be made during the spring of future years when a pay-out is to be triggered.

For too long the former Liberal Government waffled on this issue, while the fund grew and farmers became more desperate. I expect the new Government, therefore, to act quickly to bring forward the necessary legislation so that western Canadian farmers will have a fighting chance next spring.

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FINANCE

SUPPORT FOR INCREASED CORPORATE TAXES

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Winnipeg businessman, Albert Cohen, President of Gendis Corporation, who believes that large Canadian corporations should be paying higher taxes to