

Oral Questions

before the price increase, in percentage terms they compare very favourably.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Not at all.

Mr. Gillespie: He will also find out that there were very substantial sums of money devoted to exploration and development in Canada. I am referring to an increase amounting to billions of dollars. As the New Democratic Party would hope, the government does not intend to tell the companies where they should drill. We believe the corporate sector is the best judge of the risks involved and the best judge of where they are likely to find oil and natural gas.

[Translation]

POSSIBLE DISCOVERY OF OIL IN EASTERN CANADA—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It also deals with oil, but in another area.

In the May edition of *Canadian Petroleum*, there is an article signed Martin Kelly where we can find data on important oil and gas fields in Labrador and Newfoundland. These data have been established by the Canadian Armed Forces but they are kept secret on the Sherness base, near Halifax. Therefore I want to ask the minister whether it would not be more advantageous for Canada to invest in an eastern project where it is possible to extract 15 billion barrels according to Gulf Oil and Imperial Oil, twice as much as the potential for both the Mackenzie delta and the Beaufort Sea. Moreover, can the minister tell the House whether these data will be made available to the Canadian industry in the near future?

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is talking about information which has been obtained from avionics equipment on overflights by the Argus plane with respect to the areas, that information is available. It is not information which would indicate the presence or non-presence of oil and gas. I checked into that particular question a week or two ago when a similar question was put. I was satisfied that that information is not the kind of information which can be used to determine the presence of major hydrocarbon deposits in the offshore. The major reason activity is not going on, at the present time, is that the government of Newfoundland adopted a very intransigent position with respect to the permit rights of the EastCan group. I suspect that was largely because of the influence of the former minister of energy and mines for that province, who now sits as the energy critic for the Tory Party.

[Mr. Gillespie.]

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

ALLEGED MISREPRESENTATION IN POST OFFICE ADVERTISING—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I want to assure him that I ask this question with great seriousness and I hope he will take it under consideration. It deals with the misrepresentation of facts applied by the assured mail program of the Post Office. In view of the fact that studies done by a number of people including Alderman Ying Hope and organizations such as the *Toronto Globe and Mail* show without doubt that mail posted one day is not delivered the next day, will the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs take action against the Postmaster General to ask him to cease and desist from this misleading type of advertising?

● (1430)

Hon. A. C. Abbott (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I will be happy to take seriously the point the hon. member has raised and will consult with my colleague.

Mr. Gillies: Is it, then, the minister's policy that when actual evidence is brought to bear that misleading advertising is taking place in this country, that his department will do absolutely nothing about it and that private corporations which are involved in misleading advertising need not worry because it is the policy of the government to allow the Post Office to get away with misleading advertising when they will not let it happen in the private sector?

Mr. Abbott: I am sure the hon. member realizes that legally and technically there is no way in which one arm of Her Majesty's government could prosecute another, even were the grounds for doing so to exist. So, when he makes an allegation of misleading advertizing about a government department the best I can do, and I have undertaken to do so, is to sit down with the minister and examine the advertizement about which he is speaking and take the matter into consideration.

Mr. Gillies: When will the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs report that he has taken this action, one which I consider to be completely inappropriate; he should be talking to the Solicitor General and finding means by which to cause the government to live up to the things it has promised to do. When will the minister report to the House? Will it be tomorrow? The operations of the Post Office in this nation are disgraceful.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!