

*Government Orders*

without fear of sudden interruption. This government has adopted a market oriented energy policy in the belief that a flexible, dynamic and diverse domestic energy sector provides the best option to guarantee the long-term energy security of Canadians.

To deal with possible short-term interruptions of oil supply, the government has relied on a co-operative approach with the International Energy Agency member countries. Canada participates in an emergency oil sharing scheme which would be triggered should a significant loss of oil supplies occur. Continued public ownership of Petro-Canada does nothing to enhance stability of oil prices, nor does it increase the quantities of oil flowing to Canadian consumers.

The sources of information available to the government on the operations and the opportunities in the industry are today quite extensive. The Petroleum Monitoring Agency gathers and publishes valuable information annually and semi-annually regarding the financial performance of the oil and gas industry, as well as trends in ownership and control. The National Energy Board and the department are probably well informed on industry developments and are able to provide advice on developments in geology, technology, and market conditions. The window on the industry role no longer is a critical element of Petro-Canada's mandate.

Many of the energy policy initiatives which were once to be carried out in large part by Petro-Canada can now be served without the need for intervention by a Crown owned company. In these circumstances it is clear that continued Crown ownership of Petro-Canada is not required.

• (1250)

In addition to the many fiscal and other reasons for privatizing Petro-Canada which the minister for privatization has touched on, it is the government's view that the sale of the company would help achieve the government's energy objectives. Privatization will remove some financial constraints to the aggressive oil and gas investment activities of Petro-Canada and will increase Canadian energy security by increasing the strength of the Canadian oil and gas industry. It will also leave the company free to respond efficiently and effectively to supply demand conditions both internationally and in domestic markets.

In conclusion, some members opposite in this House believe that Petro-Canada should be used as an instrument to help keep gasoline prices down. I would like to reply to them that it was never intended that Petro-Canada be forced to play this role and that it has never done so.

Furthermore, should Petro-Canada try to depress gasoline prices it would damage the corporation's viability and drive small independent gasoline retailers out of the business, as they do not have the ability to withstand long periods of low or negative earnings. The outcome would be only a decrease in competition in gasoline, refining, and marketing, and ultimately increased costs to the consumers and reduced profitability for the industry.

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted in one sense to have an opportunity to take part in this debate on time allocation but really saddened that the opportunity has been forced upon us one more time.

The hon. member for Athabasca threw some figures around in his speech earlier today, and I cannot let those figures go unchallenged. We know that since 1989 and the Speech from the Throne that commenced this particular session closure has been used 13 times by this government. One might hope that the 13th time might prove singularly unlucky for this government, but of course I shant get into superstitions of that nature.

Previous to that, in this government's Parliament that sat from 1984 to 1988, closure was used twice. In the governments previous to that, the Trudeau government of 1980 to 1984, closure was used twice. Where are the rights of Canadians being taken care of with a government that refuses to allow debate?

The whole point of closure historically in the parliamentary sense was to prevent an opposition that was being unduly recalcitrant and refusing to allow the will of the government to be passed, the duly elected government. To have a bill introduced and closure motion brought in instantly, hardly fits the spirit of time allocation. How can anyone say that the opposition, either the Official Opposition or the New Democratic Party, is being unruly or unduly blocking government legislation when we barely have the time to discuss matters of great importance to our nation? Thirteen times and this Parliament is barely two years old.

My hon. friend from Kingston and the Islands has brought this to the attention of the House. My hon.