

Clark is "castrating Petro Canada"

by Susan Edgett

The handling of Petro Canada by the Clark government task force is "totally unacceptable" said federal opposition energy critic, Marc Lalonde, in a speech to an audience of Dalhousie students last Thursday at the Weldon Law Building.

According to the report recently released by the task force, Petro Canada has a double mandate; to serve national interest and to make a profit. "The task force must not have read the Petro Canada Act," said Lalonde.

In 1975, the Liberal majority government set up Petro Canada to act in all areas of energy, including exploration and development. The Act does not stipulate that Petro Canada is principally a profit making crown corporation, said Lalonde.

After 3½ years, Canada now has a major Canadian corporation in the oil industry. Petro Canada is the country's sole "window" on the international oil industry, he said. The private sector has never been able to compete with foreign oil corporations.

The Clark government set up the task force to investigate how Petro Canada should be dismantled. Lalonde said the recommendations made by the task force call for the "castration of Petro Canada". The committee proposes to take away from the corporation all profit making functions and leave it with the debt.

The \$2.6 billion debt would be distributed as shares to the Canadian taxpayers. In other words, the government would cover the corporation's debt and sell its profitable assets. "It resembles a divorce settlement where one person gets the house and the other gets the mortgage," said Lalonde.

Lalonde agrees that certain crown corporations, such as Nordair, should be returned to the private sector. The trend today is towards national oil companies, said Lalonde as Sweden, France, Italy and Britain have demonstrated. In Petro Canada's case, the people of Canada will only lose a grip on the oil industry if the corporation is sold to the private sector. (Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan have voiced an interest in buying Petro Canada.) Without a national oil company,

the government will have a smaller instrument to deal with the multinational oil corporations, he said.

The result of the Combined Investigations report, started at the first of this year, on price fixing between large oil corporations, is expected in the future. Lalonde said the government could reinforce its hand in Petro Canada and "keep those guys honest."

When asked what the federal government has been doing to find an energy resource alternative, Lalonde made reference to a government document published in 1978 entitled "The Energy Future for Canadians." He said that a certain sum from the Alberta Fund should go to the federal government to develop energy alternative research.

"It is in Canada's national interest to maintain Petro Canada as a crown corporation in order to protect the country's oil industry from foreign corporations," said Lalonde. "We'll fight it all the way."



Mark Lalonde speaks at Dal

Dal Photo / Grandy

Dalhousie helps developing countries

by Greg Morgan

Despite what people say about Dal's investments in dictatorships in Africa and South America, Dal is contributing some positive work to the developing world. Peru has benefited from a project done two years ago, and just now, a training programme is going on in Ghana.

In the last months of 1977, Dal's Oceanography Department participated in a study on Peru's anchovy fishery. The anchovy, a major source of animal feed, had been a mainstay of Peru's economy until it almost disappeared in 1971, after years of over-fishing. The crisis required a reduction of catches. Unfortunately, quotas could be estimated only on the basis of the size of the catch of the preceding year, a very crude method.

Endowed with one million dollars by CIDA, the study found a more modern way to predict how much could be caught without damaging fish stocks. It uses data on the concentrations of anchovy larvae and plankton found in the water over the past couple of years. Some money was used to build a large sea aquarium in Lima and to send some Peruvians to Canada for training in oceanographic techniques. About 70 oceanographers, 40 from Halifax and the rest from Peru, worked together. Meanwhile, analysis of the data obtained continues at Dalhousie.

Another CIDA funded pro-

gramme, the "Ghana Project", teaches middle-echelon civil servants how to plan and manage certain kinds of development projects. Dal's Centre for Development Projects is helped in the programme by the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), a local business college. Begun in 1976, it should continue into 1981.

The two or three Economics professors sent by Dalhousie each year form the project's nucleus, but they rely heavily on instructors from Ghana's civil service to teach special aspects of the course. Canadian bureaucrats, some quite high ranking, have contributed usefully as well. In contrast to the higher education received by most of the trainees, the matter taught is strictly practical, and "tailored" carefully so it can be applied to local problems. Ex-students work on several projects, including improvements to the Volta River Authority and to Ghana's highways.

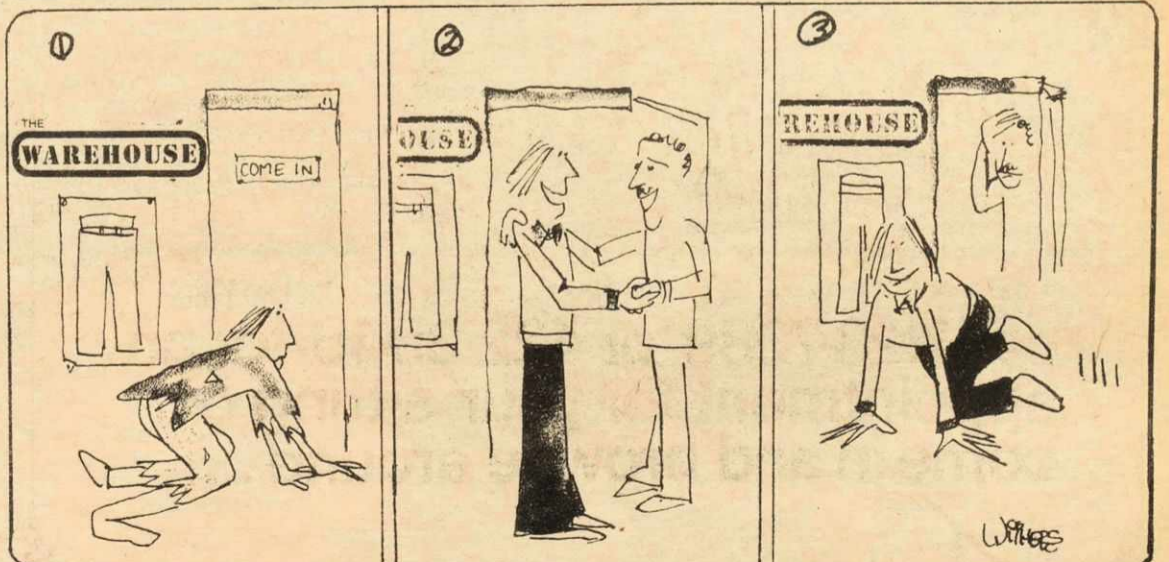
The Dalhousie Ocean Studies Programme, headed by Professor Gold, has two Third World Projects in mind. The program's theme is "New directions in ocean law, policy, and management." A project planned for West Africa will attempt to suggest solutions to a quagmire of difficulties in the Gulf of Guinea. Another, centering on the Caribbean's Windward Islands, will study some disputes over ocean jurisdictions.

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