

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, January 25, 1984

The House met at 2 p.m.

● (1405)

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

CORPORATE AFFAIRS

SPREAD IN GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, it has become increasingly evident that today's Canadian consumer faces greater and greater disparities between the price of unleaded gasoline as opposed to leaded gasoline. The advent of the catalytic converter has substantially reduced the options available for consumers and, as a Member of Parliament, I fully intend to study this very serious situation. Since I no longer have a conflict of interest, being no longer in the gasoline business, it might be suggested to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs that she could have a window on the oil industry if she were to consider buying a share in the "Freedom to Measure" retail outlet on Highway No. 7.

I am also deeply concerned about the authorized gas wars that have occurred from time to time in various municipalities across the country, creating disparities of some 50 cents per gallon between one municipality and the next, a few miles down the road.

With these kinds of obvious situations occurring in the oil industry, I do not think we need a costly commission to be appointed by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to investigate whether there is any indication of price fixing by the major oil industries or whether there is a rip-off of the Canadian consumer in the difference in price between leaded and unleaded gasoline. So I am serving notice that what we need is remedial action, not—

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member, but his time has expired.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

CANADIAN FORCES BASE CHATHAM, N.B.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, one of the most important economic and political issues in New Brunswick today is the situation at CFB Chatham. One would not, however, draw that conclusion from the

frivolous and banal remarks made in the House yesterday by the Hon. Member for Fundy-Royal.

My position, Mr. Speaker, is well known. It is on the record, both in New Brunswick and in *Hansard*. It has been, and will remain, consistent. Surprisingly enough, it does not differ substantially from that of the Government of New Brunswick, the Hatfield Government. I have spent a great deal of time and energy trying to assure a just and lasting solution. I am confident the remainder of the solution will be announced without undue delay, but I am just as sure that it will not come from Fundy-Royal.

Talk is cheap, Mr. Speaker, and cheap talk is even cheaper. It takes seriousness, effort, and dedication to achieve progress and beneficial results.

The Hon. Member for Fundy-Royal demonstrated yesterday that his concern for the Miramichi and the welfare of its people is on a par with that of a mongoose for a cobra. His silly remarks are proof of the old adage that it is better to remain quiet and seem a fool, than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt.

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PETRO-CANADA

DRILLING OPERATIONS OFF COASTS OF AFRICA

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, most Canadians agree that the extension of aid and financial assistance to deserving nations advances our status in the international community and may result in direct economic benefits; in short, there is a case to be made for foreign aid. However, the kind and extent of our assistance programs should be carefully monitored and assessed.

Here is a case in point. Petro-Canada, not content with its role in domestic energy exploration, wants to expand to the international scene. By way of masking Petro-Canada's expansionary propensity, their officers conspire with their superiors in Government, and create "Petro-Canada International Assistance Corporation".

One of the selected assignments was to drill for oil off the coasts of two west African nations in an area almost certain to give rise to a dispute. Sure enough, the Petro-Canada drillship, leased from foreign interests, was buzzed by Soviet built jet fighters and boarded by Guinea Bissau troops who arrived in two gunboats. Petro-Canada, in defending this risky venture, said: "We were assured by neighbouring Senegal there would be no problem." Petro-Canada is either naively inexperienced,