

ment of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in regard to making land available to Yukon citizens for lease or for purchase. The hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) highlighted this controversy by alleging improprieties in the department—

Mr. Nielsen: That is not true. I alleged no improprieties.

Mr. Chénier:—in regard to some 13 rural lots south of Whitehorse. Of course, there was no such impropriety, as was recently stated publicly by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro).

There are, however, some lingering misunderstandings of the department's land disposition policies in the Yukon which I would like to dispel. For many years the department held to what can be described as a laissez-faire policy in the granting of surface interests to Yukon lands.

Individuals or firms which applied to the federal lands office rarely had their applications rejected. The primary criteria was that an applicant should receive as much land area as he needed for his purpose. There was only a cursory review and evaluation of the application, with little or no territorial government input, and the cost of land was set at the minimum allowable in the territorial lands regulations. It became obvious that uncontrolled disposition could lead to costly unplanned-for demands for public services and to environmental damage. It soon became necessary for the department to apply policies that would gain control of the situation. As an example, the department felt it necessary to apply a policy under which cottage recreational lots would be made available in future only in planned subdivisions. Some 500 lots have been prepared and released by the department since then.

However, the predominant measure taken to impose order on a situation that was getting out of hand by the mid-1970s was to enter into co-operative land-use planning projects with the Yukon government. Since 1977, both levels of government have pursued land-use planning in what is called the Whitehorse north study area, encompassing 750 square miles, and the Whitehorse south study area, encompassing some 1,400 square miles.

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In effect, these projects have addressed the rural land development requirements and aspirations of 60 per cent of the Yukon's population. The projects were carried out with extensive public participation. The Yukon government and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development have approved the findings of the studies which will provide for rural residential acreage lots being made available in the near future. The government of the Yukon will announce very soon a policy for rural lot development in the Whitehorse area.

The method by which the department makes land available in a fair and equitable manner also needs to be addressed. The regional lands office employs three systems. I will not be able to explain all of them, but I should like to continue this with the hon. member when I get the chance.

Mr. Nielsen: I wish you would answer the question.

Adjournment Debate

PETRO-CANADA—INQUIRY WHETHER OFFER MADE TO PURCHASE PETROFINA

Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, January 16, I put a question in the House to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde). I asked him whether he could deny or confirm that Petro-Canada had made a purchase offer to Petrofina. He replied that he was not aware of any approach made by Petro-Canada to Petrofina in recent months.

I should explain that the background to that question was a conversation I had with the minister the previous Wednesday, in which I made known to him that there were allegations that the president of Petrofina had made known to other persons what he considered to be offers by Petro-Canada for the purchase of his company.

Two weeks later came the confirmation that our suspicions were well-founded—Petro-Canada was buying Petrofina. The acquisition by Petro-Canada of Petrofina represents a significant step in achieving the goals of the government's energy program.

From now on Petro-Canada will not be only a national company by name, but in reality, from Cape Breton to Vancouver. Petro-Canada already owns gas stations in western Canada, but not in the east. This will change with the acquisition of Petrofina's 1,086 stations across Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces.

When the federal Liberal government announced the National Energy Program on October 28, the keystone of the program was, and still is, the intention to increase Canadian participation in our domestic oil and gas industries. This acquisition is one of which all Canadians can be proud.

Easterners should be able to buy gas from their national oil company rather than from foreign-owned gas stations, as westerners have been able to do since Petro-Canada bought Pacific Petroleum in 1978.

The energy policy received an additional boost a couple of weeks ago when Dome Petroleum announced a multibillion dollar energy exploration program. The price paid for Petrofina has been estimated by various people, but I have noticed that Wood Gundy, a brokerage house, calculated Petrofina's net asset value before the federal budget as \$99.31 a share and its post-budget value as \$81.54. Of course the point is that as a nationally-owned company it can return to its \$99.31 per share value. A premium under those circumstances of \$21 a share or 21 per cent is certainly not out of line with similar purchases.

The purchase of Petrofina propels Petro-Canada into fifth place from eighth place in the oil and gas business. The other four major petroleum companies—Imperial Oil, Gulf Canada, Texaco Canada and Shell Canada—are all foreign-owned. Petrofina's oil and gas production, its tar sands interests, its Montreal refinery and its more than 1,000 gasoline outlets will now be owned by Petro-Canada.

I should like to make some reference to the four foreign-owned companies which I mentioned. For example, Imperial