

Oral Questions

the government ordering the oil companies to roll back that increase?

● (1430)

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Postmaster General): Madam Speaker, the hon. member asked that question last week. I would urge him to let the director of investigations complete his work. As soon as the director submits his report, I will be very glad to answer the hon. member in the House.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN SPEAKER'S GALLERY OF PRESIDENT OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF EUROPE

Madam Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of the House to the presence in our gallery of Mr. Henri Johan de Koster, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

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[English]

NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

IMPACT ON PROVINCIAL REVENUES

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Madam Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. A budget was brought down in British Columbia on Monday. The price of gasoline was raised 1.6 cents per litre, or 7 cents per gallon, to compensate for the much diminished provincial revenues in the oil and natural gas sector due to increased federal intrusion. Is the minister aware of the secondary results of his National Energy Program? If so, does he intend to do anything about it?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I am only sorry that the hon. member believes the Socred propaganda of that particular government in its budget.

Mr. McKinnon: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister. It is now quite clear that the National Energy Program, which was announced as part of the federal budget, is really a grab for money by the federal government, which takes money away from provincial revenues. In this particular case British Columbia was forced to increase prices on the individuals in that province. Does the minister consider this new federal form of taxation, which taxes only one part of Canada, that is, British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan, fair? Does he not realize how much this policy appears to contribute to alienation in western Canada?

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, what contributes most to alienation in this country is the type of total misrepresentation put forward by the hon. member.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, every gas consumer in this country is paying the same amount of federal tax under the last budget. As the hon. member knows, there are many more consumers of natural gas in Ontario than there are in British Columbia. Those consumers pay the same federal tax that the people in British Columbia are paying. To stand up in this House and make the type of allegation that the hon. member has made is totally irresponsible. He should be ashamed of himself.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DEPARTMENTAL ADVERTISING EXPENDITURES

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It relates to political energy advertising, although it is not the type referred to by the Leader of the NDP. My question involves the expenditure of tax dollars.

In view of press reports this week that the minister's department is authorizing a \$3.25 million energy advertising campaign to sell the Liberal energy policies to Canadians, how can the minister justify that expenditure of tax dollars in light of the commitment made last fall by the Minister of State for Multiculturalism that the government would not use tax dollars to sell Liberal policies which have not been approved by Parliament? I ask this question particularly in view of the fact that elements of the national energy policy are before Parliament now, or have yet to be brought before Parliament.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the hon. member might have a case if the allegation he makes were true, but it is not.

My department has a budget for public information and advertising. There were a number of expenditures approved by this House at the time of the budget concerning programs which would be of great benefit to Canadians in terms of achieving conservation of energy and in terms of achieving energy self-sufficiency. Those programs have been approved. The expenditure of funds allocated under the estimates and under those programs will begin very soon, as soon as we can have the administrative machinery in place.

It is the duty of this House, and the duty of the government, to inform the Canadian public of the programs for which they are eligible in order to achieve the objectives of self-sufficiency and energy conservation. I certainly intend to fulfil my duty under the rules of this House and under the government's responsibility to inform Canadians of the programs for which they are eligible. I think that is my duty as minister of energy, and I intend to fulfil that duty.