

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 27, 1991

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 31

[*English*]

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Bob Wood (Nipissing): Mr. Speaker, the people of my riding of Nipissing feel victimized by the pricing practices of the large gas companies. In fact we might say that they are fuming.

I must confess that I find it difficult to account for price differences of over 10 cents a litre between urban and rural points in my riding and over 20 cents a litre between northern and southern Ontario. The people want to know: How could such large differences exist within a relatively small geographic domain and isn't it odd that the retail price of gas reacts very quickly to increases in production costs and very slowly to decreases?

What is even more perplexing is that there are no mechanisms in place to ensure that consumers are not ripped off for such a vital and necessary commodity. In fact, we are at the mercy of this virtual monopoly and what it can get away with in the marketplace.

The Minister of Finance said in his budget that he wanted to be tough on inflation. Indeed, he threatened the Public Service with job losses and back to work legislation. I wonder if the minister will be just as tough on his corporate friends when they give us unwarranted price increases, for this too causes inflation. Or, is it one set of standards for his friends and another for everyone else?

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WORLD CURLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Brian White (Dauphin—Swan River): Mr. Speaker, the city of Winnipeg, the curling capital of the world,

is this week the site of the 1991 Canada Safeway World Curling Championships.

Ten teams in each of the men's and women's divisions are battling it out for a berth in Sunday's finals where world champions will be crowned.

Support from the fans has been extraordinary. A crowd of 11,349 last night at the Winnipeg arena raised the four-day attendance mark to 121,931, which eclipses the previous week-long record set at the 1978 world championships held in Winnipeg.

The combination of competitive curling, strong fan support, an army of dedicated volunteers, corporate sponsorship and excellent television coverage by TSN makes this week's curling in Winnipeg a truly unforgettable world-class event.

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GUN CONTROL

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, this House accepted over half a million signatures for gun control.

Recently, too, an Angus Reid poll found that 80 per cent of Canadians and 88 per cent of women oppose easy access to arms in this country. The petitions and the poll raise the question of democracy: a concept in which the justice minister has been citing her belief throughout the Bill C-80 saga.

She fails to mention that her own Advisory Council on Firearms consists overwhelmingly of gun users. But, as the head of Canadians for Gun Control points out, "owning a gun does not make you any more of an expert on gun control than having a disease makes you a physician".

New Democrats say to the justice minister: physician, heal thyself, include the majority of Canadians in the advisory process: the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Bar Association, the Canadian Chiefs of Police, and not just a biased minority of gun users.