

For all Canada's young people—and there are many here today, from Coaticook, Quebec to Port Ellis, British Columbia—André Viger is an outstanding example of determination, perseverance, tenacity and hard work.

Speaking for myself and on behalf of my colleagues in the House of Commons, I wish to offer André Viger our sincere congratulations.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we heard two earnest pleas from Conservative backbenchers. One was with regard to the need for early retirement benefits which, of course, would deny recipients unemployment insurance benefits, if they were able to retire; and the other was with respect to the collapse of oil prices, with the resultant hardship for many families in the Calgary area.

I wonder if these Hon. Members do not recognize that the very things about which they complain are a part of the Conservative free enterprise policy of the Government of which they are supporters. Perhaps they would do well to realize that the very things about which they are most concerned are brought about by the policies introduced by the Government. I wonder who they think they are kidding.

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ENERGY

PETROLEUM AND GAS REVENUE TAX—CALL FOR REMOVAL

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I rise to draw the attention of the House to a very real concern facing my constituents in northeastern Alberta, particularly those in Fort McMurray. The Petroleum Gas Revenue Tax, a Liberal tax which was imposed years ago, is still charged on the production of oil from the Syncrude project. I urge all Members of the House to consider this matter very carefully. I urge the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) to consider removing the Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax from all oil sands development projects.

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AGRICULTURE

REQUEST FOR PROTECTION OF FARMERS

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, western grain producers are asking for a fair deal. They are asking the

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Government to give them the necessary support so that they can compete fairly with American producers. They are asking for the same return on a bushel of Canadian grain as on that for a bushel in the United States. They ask that the Government protect Canadian farmers to the same extent that the U.S. Government protects American farmers. Is that too much for them to ask?

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ENERGY

RESCINDING OF TAX ADVOCATED

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the best advice to give the Hon. Member who complained about the gas tax levied in the area of Fort McMurray would be to talk to his own Government and have it rescind the tax. After all, why does he complain to the House of Commons? He should be complaining to his own Government, since it is the one imposing taxes these days.

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[English]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS—PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO U.S. SENATORS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the situation before the United States Senate remains a cliff-hanger whose uncertainty casts some doubt on the special relationship which the Prime Minister has with the American administration. My question for the Prime Minister relates to a letter from the President to American Senators calling for the support of U.S.-Canada trade negotiations in which he noted that Canada "has been very supportive of United States international initiatives, particularly in combating terrorism and maintaining a solid unity on major East-West and arms control issues". I ask the Prime Minister what those words of the President mean. Have we, in effect, sacrificed the independence of our foreign policy in order to buy an affirmative vote on this issue?

● (1415)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is really quite unbecoming of one who was a Prime Minister of Canada to make such a scurrilous suggestion in regard to the conduct and foreign policy of this country. The statement of the President of the United States was quite forthcoming. He views Canada as a reliable ally, and that is the way we want it to be. We do give our friends the benefit of the doubt. We do view ourselves as a reliable ally. As long as this Government is here, that is exactly what we will be.