

Mrs. Pigott: All right; calm down now.

An hon. Member: Yes, mother.

Mrs. Pigott: The cabinet document estimates that there are 438,000 Canadian households paying over 30 per cent of their income for rent and over 155,000 households living in sub-standard conditions. Can the minister confirm whether it is a policy of the government to ignore these problems and assume, as the Deputy Minister for Urban Affairs seems to, that Canadians are too well housed? Or is the vice-president of CMHC policy, Mr. Adamson, more accurate in describing the principles of government housing policy when he stated on the weekend that home owners are already well-to-do people and therefore do not require government help?

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, there is one thing I want to say. The hon. member referred to a secret document. It is not a secret document. It is a study which has been requested by CMHC to help us to design better policy in the field of housing.

An hon. Member: You sure need it.

Mr. Ouellet: This study has been completed. I am glad to hear the hon. member has a copy of it. I hope she reads it more accurately and will know a little more about housing in Canada after careful study of this document.

Mrs. Pigott: What about Mr. Adamson?

Mr. Ouellet: The consequence of this study is that the federal government has changed the over-all position of the government in relation to housing: it has decided to spend more money for low income and old-age people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ouellet: This is why we have stopped giving direct loans to the provinces and various groups which are building housing accommodations in Canada. Rather than give loans, we have decided to increase substantially our subsidies in order to help low income and old-age people have better accommodations. If I have to take advice continually I will take it from my officials, rather than from the hon. Leader of the Opposition who favoured a policy which will provide a break for high income home owners while discriminating against renters and the elderly—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Ouellet: —a proposal which could disrupt financial markets—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ora! Questions

THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

ABILITY OF PETRO-CANADA TO INCREASE ENERGY EXPLORATION FOLLOWING PURCHASE OF PACIFIC PETROLEUMS SHARES

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The takeover of Pacific Petroleum by Petro-Canada last Friday will give Canada increased ownership in this strategic industry which is over 90 per cent foreign-owned at the present time.

Will this transaction provide the financial position for Petro-Canada to press ahead with the development of frontier oil and gas reserves and transportation systems, as well as heavy oils which the minister mentioned already?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, yes, the transaction will provide additional financial muscle for the corporation through the profitability of Pacific Petroleum.

Some hon. Members: Reading!

Mr. Gillespie: So it will be possible to place less reliance on government investment in the equity of Petro-Canada. It will enable Petro-Canada to focus on some of these major challenges such as liquefied natural gas in the high Arctic, heavy oil and the offshore drilling which is ongoing at the present time, or has gone on during the season, in the eastern offshore of the country.

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FISHERIES

CLOSING OF ST. LAWRENCE, NEWFOUNDLAND, FLUORSPAR MINE—EFFECT ON EMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRY

Mr. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. As he knows, last February the St. Lawrence fluorspar mine closed, leaving hundreds of men out of work, and a proposal was put forward involving the construction of a fish plant in St. Lawrence by Fisheries Products Ltd., assisted by both governments.

Since August, when construction was to have supposedly started, everyone has been waiting for the minister to give his approval to the acquisition of two Portuguese fishing vessels to deliver fish into that plant. It cannot operate without additional fishing capacity. Will the minister tell the House whether he has made a decision yet? If he has not, when will he make a decision, so that this can get off the ground and employment will be provided in St. Lawrence?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning we made it clear that we were trying to help the community of St. Lawrence, while not jeopardizing the very fundamental policy of fisheries, which was not to allow for expansion of licences, especially those foreign-controlled and foreign-owned. This is a