

replies the hon. member ought to have as evidence by the question he is asking.

REASON FOR REFUSAL TO ALLOW UNIONS TO POST BULLETINS
ON BULLETIN BOARD

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): I ask the Postmaster General to update this action which he says is in effect but which I do not think is in effect. In other words, I do not believe the Postmaster General. With regard to the minor issue of posting union bulletins in post offices about which the Postmaster General has taken a tunnel vision approach, why has the Postmaster General disallowed this, which decision in effect has frustrated and stymied the continuation of labour negotiations with CUPW?

● (1420)

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Postmaster General): Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. gentleman would inform himself prior to putting questions to me. There has been no stymieing at all in regard to bulletins being put on the bulletin board. All we have said is that, in accordance with the collective agreement which is in force, a request has to be made of supervisory personnel before material is posted on the bulletin board or otherwise distributed. Surely, we are still in charge of the post office.

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ENERGY

THREAT BY OIL COMPANIES TO STOP DRILLING IN MACKENZIE
DELTA—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and it has to do with the announcement by Gulf Oil and Mobiloil, who have followed the example of Shell Oil, that they will do no further drilling in the Mackenzie valley delta until the federal government approves a pipeline and sets out new land regulations. They have also decided not to stockpile at their northern bases any of the equipment and supplies necessary for drilling this coming winter. What action does the minister propose to take with respect to this threatened strike by the oil companies, which has all the appearance of being an attempt at blackmail to influence the government to make a decision which is in the interests of these particular oil companies?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I think as the hon. member has suggested the oil companies have left themselves open to the charge that they are attempting some form of blackmail. I would regret that interpretation. Perhaps the real reason is that they place greater importance on the views of the New Democratic Party with respect to the need for a pipeline.

Oral Questions

OIL—POSSIBLE SUSPENSION OF PRICE INCREASE IN VIEW OF
SUGGESTION COMPANIES WILL STOP DRILLING IN MACKENZIE
DELTA

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, that is a pretty tame answer which is not going to frighten the oil companies very much. In view of the fact that when the minister announced that over the next 12 months there will be an increase of \$2 a barrel in the price of oil he gave as a reason the need for the oil companies to be able to accumulate a larger cash flow to carry out exploration in Canada, and since it is apparent that the three companies in question do not intend to carry on a certain amount of drilling or any drilling at all in the Mackenzie valley delta, does the minister intend to drop the idea of an increase in the price of oil until such time as the oil companies agree to spend this additional money on oil exploration in Canada?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): No, Mr. Speaker, there is no intention of dropping that proposal. As the hon. member must realize, the choice of where a corporation spends its exploration money is that of the corporation itself. We have made it very clear that we believe that cash flows are important in order to ensure that that exploration activity does take place and is funded by cash flow. The hon. member knows that at the present time a bill has been introduced in the Senate dealing with the monitoring of such cash flow and its application to exploration in Canada.

OIL—SUGGESTED LEGISLATION TO FORCE COMPANIES TO
SPEND MONEY ON EXPLORATION

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the government's own monitoring survey shows that cash flow by the oil industry has increased from \$1.3 billion in 1971 to over \$3 billion in 1976, while at the same time the percentage of cash flow which has gone into exploration in Canada has dropped from 87.9 per cent to 78.4 per cent and the amount of money which these companies have spent in exploration outside Canada has gone from \$34 million to over \$231 million, is it not apparent that merely monitoring what happens to cash flow is not sufficient? Is he now prepared to consider mandatory legislation which would require the companies to spend their cash flow, which they get out of the pockets of Canadian consumers, on exploration in this country?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member were not so selective in his figures, he would have understood that there has been a substantial increase in exploration activity and a significant application of the cash flow for exploration purposes. He has taken the year 1971. If he were to take the next year, 1972, as I pointed out to him before in this House, a year before the major increase in prices, he would find the percentage of funds which has been allocated for exploration and development. When comparing 1976 to 1972, the last year