

REPORTED STATEMENTS IN 1984

Mr. John Parry (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for an answer which, though mistaken, was at least understandable. Since the Prime Minister and several of his colleagues said in 1984 that the price of gasoline was a problem for the tourist industry, would the Minister tell us now that the Prime Minister was wrong or that conditions have changed since 1984 and, if so, would he tell us how?

Hon. Jack Murta (Minister of State (Tourism)): No, I won't, Mr. Speaker. The question is quite irrelevant.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gauthier: Arrogance is catching over there.

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PETRO-CANADA

DECEMBER PRICE INCREASE

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Last Monday the Minister stated that she did not know of any price increases by Petro-Canada in recent months, yet there have been two such price increases in gasoline in the last three months. Why, for instance, on December 9 was the price of gasoline increased by Petro-Canada when the price of crude had been decreasing worldwide in the months before that price increase?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware—and I will check *Hansard*—of making the comments which have been attributed to me. I do not comment on specific companies' marketing practices in specific areas. Governments do not set the price of gasoline. They reflect competition in the market-place, transportation and world prices. I may point out to the Hon. Member, because he is the critic in this field, that the component of a litre of gasoline which is directly attributable to the cost of crude is around 40 per cent to 44 per cent. Therefore it is not possible to have the kind of dramatic declines in gasoline prices as he is suggesting has taken place.

PRICE CHARGED BY OTTAWA SERVICE STATION

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, if market conditions prevail, why, in July when crude went down from \$28 per barrel U.S. to \$26.93 per barrel, did we not feel any decrease in this country? We only received increases in gasoline prices. Why is the price of gasoline charged by Petro-Canada on the Merival strip in Ottawa West 1.3 cents per litre higher, according to a very irate consumer, than the price of gasoline charged by any of its competitors? Why is the Minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That is two questions.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am truly unaware of a question directed to the Minister. If he wants to know about the cost of gasoline at an individual gas station, I suggest he should ask either the dealer or Petro-Canada directly.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

EXECUTIVES' SALARIES—REMUNERATION OF PETRO-CANADA CHAIRMAN

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. On Friday he made public the Burns Report on executive compensation in the Public Service. Why, when Mr. Burns recommended a maximum salary range for Bill Hopper, Chairman of Petro-Canada, of \$340,000, did the Prime Minister have the gall to increase his maximum salary range to some \$475,000, which is more in one day than old age pensioners on the GIS and OAS receive in two months? Why did he have the gall to hand out such a handsome increase to Mr. Hopper?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, in response to the Hon. Member I should start by saying that the proposition which he put forward is purely and utterly false. There is no basis in fact in what he said in respect of that particular increase. The situation is that there was an advisory group on executive compensation in the Public Service created by Mr. Trudeau. It made recommendations with respect to senior positions in the Public Service and in Crown corporations. The average increase is about 5 per cent in respect of compensation, less than that recommended by the particular group. I simply say to the Hon. Member that the particular group in question recommended higher compensation, but the decision of the Government was to give it on a lower basis, about 5 per cent on the average.

SALARY OF VIA RAIL CHAIRMAN

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister to answer a question about his old crony, Lawrence Hanigan, former PC candidate and now Chairman of VIA Rail. Why did he agree to increase the maximum pay for Mr. Hanigan by some \$36,000 per year, which is a 40 per cent increase, while at the same time chisel the children of the country with a 31-cent per month increase in family allowances?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, again the proposition put forward by the Hon. Member is simply false. I wish, when he poses questions in the House, he would get his facts straight. That has absolutely nothing to do with the facts. The reality is that the 1984 range refers to his predecessor, Mr. Renouf, whose job was part-time. There was no increase in respect of Mr. Hanigan at all.