

*Oral Questions***ENERGY**

INCREASE IN PRICE OF GASOLINE DECREED BY ULTRAMAR

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, there were bad news for Quebecers today. The Ultramar Corporation has announced an increase of close to 2 cents a litre on gasoline at the pump.

Mr. Speaker, we all remember that nine months ago, this Conservative Government approved the purchase by Ultramar of the Gulf refinery and other facilities, so that it could shut down the Montreal East End refinery, reduce competition, secure a monopolistic position and increase fuel prices at the pump.

It is my hope that this Conservative Government and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Masse) will ask Petro-Canada not to follow the bad example set up by Ultramar. And I am inviting all Quebecers to boycott Ultramar and to fill up at other stations where they can have cheaper gasoline.

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[English]

THE PRESS

IMPORTANCE OF WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS—NECESSITY TO RETAIN SPECIAL POSTAL RATES

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon—Souris): Mr. Speaker, the first newspaper which I ever read was a community weekly newspaper. Like many Canadians, I continue to read such newspapers literally from cover to cover. For many of us who either grew up in rural communities or continue to live in rural communities, the weekly newspaper was and still is an important and sometimes the only source of information. Moreover, the weekly newspaper was and is a unifying factor, a source of local pride, and the personification of the community itself.

Due to the vastness of Canada, and the degree of isolation which exists in many of our rural communities, Governments historically have recognized the need to subsidize postal rates for many of our special interest publications, including weekly community newspapers.

● (1415)

Unfortunately Canada Post officials are now threatening to abolish those special postal rates. The end result, tragically, would be the demise of some local newspapers due to an insufficient number of subscribers and advertisers.

In light of the historic and continuing role of weeklies as community builders and supporters, I urge Canada Post officials and the Minister responsible to continue the policy of concessionary rates to this industry.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

MONCTON SHOPS—PROPOSED SALE TO CANADIAN GENERAL ELECTRIC

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. He knows that the CN shops in Moncton are the largest industrial employer in the Atlantic provinces. He also should know that the Deputy Prime Minister promised that there would never be any massive lay-offs at those shops. He indicated at one time that there was no prospect of a sale. Of course there have been negotiations for a sale, and now we learn from Canadian General Electric that the sale has either been cancelled or suspended. Why does the Government not fulfil its promises to the people of New Brunswick? What is the Government doing to try to save the CN shops at Moncton?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition might keep in mind that during the period from 1980 to 1984 average employment with CN declined by 8,000 persons. We wonder where he was while that was happening.

To deal with the position at Moncton, the proposed sale of part of the main shops at Moncton, which was arranged by CN, to CGE, is not cancelled. CN is still prepared to meet with the unions concerned to see if the matter can be resolved. Two of the seven unions have refused to agree to what they call contracting out so that the present employees of CN can continue to do the same work for CGE at those shops—maintenance work on Bombardier locomotives. It is still prepared to meet with them and hope that agreement can still be reached, so the matter is not yet concluded.

CN and the Government will do everything possible to see that the 303 persons who would have jobs in the CGE operation get that opportunity and that Moncton has the opportunity for that kind of industrial development.

[Translation]

NECESSITY THAT CN SHOPS IN MONCTON NOT BE CLOSED

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Moncton shops used to employ 1,200 workers, but only half of them are left now. As the Minister would know, the Moncton CN shops are one of the mainstays of the economy of the Atlantic Provinces. The Deputy Prime Minister had promised they would remain open.

Why is the Government attempting to shirk its responsibility? Why is the Government failing to live up to its promises to New Brunswickers? Why is the Government failing to live up to the promises it made in the Speech from the Throne? Why is the Government abandoning the men and women who work in the Moncton CN shops? These are facts.