the problem which I presented to the Chair yesterday, and I would not want the Chair to think that by my not pursuing the matter today I was not doing so at the earliest opportunity. In fact, my research has led me to the belief that the matter must be thoroughly prepared before it is presented to you, and I will probably be doing that either tomorrow or Monday.

Madam Speaker: I take note of that.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA OIL AND GAS ACT

MEASURE RESPECTING OIL AND GAS INTERESTS

The House resumed, from Wednesday, November 4, consideration of Bill C-48, to regulate oil and gas interests in Canada lands and to amend the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works, and Motion No. 27 (Mr. Wilson).

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Madam Speaker, I would like to deal with one or two items in connection with Motion No. 27. First I want to mention a statement made by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) when he said that there is enough competition in the industry to allow Petro-Canada stations to compete with other gas stations. We do not object to competition; we like competition. Competition is the life blood of free enterprise. What we object to is favouritism. We object when one group is given a head start. So the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway is wrong when he criticizes members of this party and leads people to believe that we are opposed to Petro-Canada's competing with other stations. He is absolutely wrong. We believe in competition, but we want that competition to be fair and honest. I thought I should at least put the record straight in that regard.

I would also like to deal with one or two points raised by the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) when he was speaking about this motion yesterday. He said that there have been instances in the past in which the operators of foreign-owned multinationals could not carry out work in the north. Well, whether it is a multinational company, a Canadian company, a small company or a big company, certain work cannot be carried out in the north during part of the year. If the work is building accesses, probably the best time of the year to build on muskeg is in the wintertime; but if the work is drilling, there are difficulties which have to be overcome.

The hon. member for Algoma justified Clause 35, which we want to delete, by saying that the minister had to have this particular power as a safeguard because some companies—he said multinationals, but he could have said other companies, Canadian companies, independent companies and so forth—might not want to do the work and might want to delay it. I think that is a ridiculous argument. In the first place, those companies which are in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon or on the ocean to the north have every incentive to stay there. They are the ones which have put in their hard earned cash to be up there, and they are not going to pull out and head for Saudi Arabia simply because we have cold winters in the north. This clause is not a safeguard at all. It is ridiculous to say that the minister is given this power in Clause 35(1) to safeguard the interests of Canadians. That is not correct.

Let me just deal with one or two cases. The hon. member for Algoma, who is a Liberal, said that in some cases private enterprise feels no responsibility to Canada and that therefore this ia a good safeguard. I do not go along with that at all. Small, independent Canadian companies such as the one mentioned yesterday by the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre) have spent a lot of money up there and, after spending all that money, they found some gas and capped the wells while waiting for the day when there will be a pipeline. To say that such a company has no interest in Canada and has no responsibility to Canada is completely ridiculous. We do not need a clause like Clause 35(1) to encourage such enterprise. It does not encourage, it discourages. Let me read what it says:

> The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources may, by order subject to section 56, direct that any designated Crown corporation that holds a Crown share transfered to it under section 31 shall be the operator with respect to the relevant interest.

In other words, the minister can designate Petro-Canada to go in and reap all the rewards of the work done by a small, independent company. That is not my idea of fair competition.

Let us look at something else in relation to this same item. Hon. members talk about the advantages and disadvantages of Petro-Canada. I emphasize that we want Petro-Canada to have a fair chance. We want its stations to have a fair chance, but we do not want favouritism given to them. Let us look at how these stations came into being in the first place. Petrofina was purchased with 1.4 billion of Canadians' dollars, far in excess of the proper price. Canadians were stung in the first instance by Petro-Canada's making a bad deal in purchasing this company. Petro-Canada paid twice as much for it as it should have.

● (1550)

When we look at the profits of Petrofina over the last few years, if my memory is correct, Petrofina made $24 million in 1979. In 1980 the profit figure rose to about $80 million. In 1981 it appears the profit will be less than the $24 million the company made in 1979. If PetroCan had been businesslike, it could have taken the $1.46 billion, which it did not have and that it is now taking out of people's pockets through the gasoline price at the pumps, and invested it at the very lowest interest offered by the banks today. This would have secured more than $20 million for the people of Canada.

If Petro-Canada is interested in helping the people of Canada, why did that company pay off the Belgian debt with Canadian money? That is just about what has happened. The company was not showing interest in the welfare of Canadians by buying Petrofina. We object to this type of thing very