

Oral Questions

locked itself into a straitjacket, to protect the medicare program?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Health and Welfare have already responded to questions on this subject.

● (1420)

As the hon. member knows, the understanding with respect to medicare was founded on cornerstones which were accepted, certainly, by the Parliament of Canada and by the provinces. It is still the view of the Government of Canada that those basic principles are still to be the essence of the medicare plan.

The hon. member asks what we are going to do about it, in the circumstances. The matter is one that is quite serious. Obviously, the government will have to consider in detail what steps it could take in order to ensure that these fundamental principles will be observed.

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[Translation]

ENERGY**POSSIBILITY THAT EXXON SUPPLIED BIASED INFORMATION TO NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD**

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of State for Science and Technology.

The minister stated recently in the House that 90 per cent of the petroleum industry in Canada is under foreign control. In view of this assessment and the recent events involving Exxon which clearly indicated where the loyalty of these multinationals lies, could the minister assure the House that these corporations had not deliberately supplied biased information to the National Energy Board, information which served as a basis for its most recent report?

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I wish that it were as low as 80 per cent. Unfortunately, the industry is controlled to a greater extent than 80 per cent by foreign corporations in this country.

As to the question the hon. member asks with respect to the information provided to the National Energy Board, I can assure him that the National Energy Board is very much aware of the concern he has expressed, the possibility that information could be slanted. That is the reason the National Energy Board exists, and they have experts who are competent to assess the information they are provided with from the point of view of the Canadian interest.

[Mr. Rae.]

[Translation]

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the minister. Could he explain to the House, without being unduly evasive, how he could be in favour of exporting our surplus of gas, as he was two weeks ago in the House, while knowing that we risk facing a shortage before 1992? Is this not a policy which would greatly benefit the multinationals at the expense of Canadians?

[English]

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the findings of the National Energy Board with respect to increases in gas reserves are, on the whole, probably conservative. That seems to be the view of many who have knowledge of the situation. I believe that by introducing two additional deliverability tests, the National Energy Board has protected Canada against any premature or excessive export of gas which has been found surplus to domestic needs.

I have also stated that I believe exportable surplus can be used for the benefit of Canada in making economically viable a gas pipeline and the movement of gas to eastern Canada and markets not now served by Canadian gas, and by so doing reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

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LOTO CANADA**TICKET SALES IN DRAW NO. 12**

Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) who is responsible for reporting to parliament on the activities of Loto Canada.

Could the minister confirm to the House that ticket sales in the present draw of Loto Canada, draw No. 12, are likely to be the lowest in its history, and that even if Loto Canada meets its target for draw No. 12, \$20 million worth of tickets will remain unsold?

Hon. Iona Campagnolo (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport)): Mr. Speaker, I have the assurance of Loto Canada that it will meet its goal of 3.5 million tickets for draw No. 12.

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, the minister has confirmed that this will be the worst draw ever and that two million tickets, worth \$20 million, will be returned unsold.

● (1425)

Last week, in an attempt to boost lagging sales of tickets for draw No. 12, Loto Canada signed a special arrangement with the merchandising giant, Miracle Mart, to deliver directly to Miracle Mart 5,000 tickets, worth \$50,000, as a result bypassing Loto Canada's own wholesalers. I ask the minister why a decision was made to do this, in defiance of Loto Canada's own wholesalers, when the same arrangement is not available