

Oral Questions

Government—into the context they are, totally ignoring that the Government has created 40,000 more jobs in the City of Montreal since taking power.

● (1130)

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHY GOVERNMENT DID NOT DELAY GULF-ULTRAMAR TRANSACTION FOR NINETY DAYS

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. In her letter of resignation, the former Minister of State for Transport stated, and I quote:

The actual influence of the Ministers from Quebec in the decision process within Cabinet is in my view inadequate.

The answers we get are evidence of that Government's incompetence and inefficiency.

Here is my question to the Minister: Will the Minister explain why the ministerial committee for the Montreal area failed to recommend to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion postponing by 90 days the decision on the Gulf-Ultramar issue as requested by the Quebec Government? Why did they fail to recommend that?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, in response to my colleague I would simply tell him to what extent the Ministers from Quebec are and have been concerned with the Montreal issue. The unemployment rate in Montreal is the lowest since 1981, because of steps we took to defend the interests of Montrealers, a lot better than you ever did when you were in power.

Mr. Malépart: Answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. A supplementary.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT WORK WITH ULTRAMAR TO PROTECT JOBS IN QUEBEC

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the same Minister. It is really sad for Quebecers, men and women, to watch today the behaviour of their Members of Parliament and Ministers. Will the Minister at least tell us whether he endorses the representations now being made by the Bourassa Government to Ultramar before it sells the refinery in east-end Montreal to *Gaz métropolitain*, and whether he is ready to make up for his previous failure to address representations to that company in order to protect jobs in Quebec?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, speaking of behaviour I would like to ask my hon. colleague how he behaved when they closed down Esso, when they closed down BP, when they closed down Texaco,

when they wiped out 1,080 jobs in east-end Montreal. How did he behave then? I say he rated zero for behaviour.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An Hon. Member: Where were you in 1983? You were hiding.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. de Cotret: Mr. Speaker, where was he when the previous Government announced it was putting an end to the petro-chemical industry, to Pétromont? In a matter of weeks, we injected \$15 million in Pétromont, and we have just injected another \$55.8 million in Pétromont to ensure a viable petro-chemical industry in Montreal. This I call progress. This I call building on solid accomplishments.

[English]

REFINING CAPACITY

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for industry. It is also on the question of Gulf and Ultramar in Montreal. We heard, this morning, from the Minister of Energy that there is a surplus of refining capacity in the City of Montreal, in the Province of Quebec. On the other hand, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has said that there is a shortage of refining capacity. My question is a simple one. Which Minister is correct and, second, will he table the O'Farrell Report in the House?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to correct my colleague and say that I have not made any statement to the effect that there is a shortage of capacity. I reported the comments made by the Director of Investigations under the Combines Investigation Act. There now exists a complex problem of under-capacity or surplus capacity. I have referred this problem to the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission, which is now examining the oil industry and will report early in 1986.

INQUIRY CONCERNING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POLICY OF PRESENT AND PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, three years ago, the previous Liberal Government allowed three Montreal refineries to close. My question is as follows: What is the difference between the policy of the present Government and that of the previous Liberal Government three years ago? What is the difference?

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, there is in fact a lot of difference. In February 1983 . . . My colleague from the Trea-