

Oral Questions

part of Petro-Canada or is it Government policy not to sell it? Which is it?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, before the Hon. Member gets completely carried away, let me read from the rest of Petro-Canada's mandate as dictated by me.

Mr. Broadbent: That is your mandate. That is not the Act.

Miss Carney: If the House cares to listen, it states: "However, the Government maintains the right as a shareholder to formally direct Petro-Canada to carry out certain activities in the national interest".

Some of these include Hibernia and Venture and the High Arctic. Our intention with Petro-Canada is to ensure that it will be in a position to develop these very vital resources for our energy supply in the future.

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[Translation]

ENERGY

GULF REFINERY CLOSURE IN MONTREAL—EFFECT ON CONSUMERS EXPECTING PRICE REDUCTION

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, the people of Montreal are also continuing to pay a lot for gas, despite the fact that world prices have started to fall dramatically.

I want to direct my question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and inform her that this morning regular gas was selling for 59 cents a litre at the Petrocan station at 5985 Côte-des-Neiges, Montreal.

Meanwhile, in Boston the same gas was selling for 41.7 cents a litre, and 43 cents a litre—

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. These are becoming long preambles. May I have a question, please?

[Translation]

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): I would like to ask the Minister how closing down the Gulf refinery in Montreal can help the Montreal consumer who is waiting in vain for a drop in gas prices to reflect the drop in the price of crude oil?

[English]

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I believe the Hon. Member is confusing two issues. I stated in the House that the supply and demand situation is quite in balance in Quebec. I have also said in the House that, as the price decreases work their way through the system, consumers in Montreal and other parts of Canada can expect some benefit.

May I point out that one of the reasons why Montrealers pay such high prices as he quotes is that the provincial Government in Quebec applies a very high rate of tax. It is about 22 per cent of the cost of a litre of gasoline. I suggest that he is addressing his question to the wrong Minister.

[Translation]

REDUCTION OF GASOLINE PRICES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to ask the Minister how many thousands of signatures the national committee for the reduction of gas prices will have to collect before the Government decides to act in the interests of consumers?

In other words, what will it take for the Government to break down and to do something about the price of gas?

[English]

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Government has already acted to the benefit of consumers by putting in place a market-sensitive system where gas price decreases can be passed along to the consumer, not like his Party which put in place a system whereby gas prices increased 80 per cent under that Government.

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TOURISM

EFFECT OF GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. John Parry (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Tourism. Last Wednesday he told the House, as reported at page 10038 of *Hansard*:

—price has not had a significant impact on Americans' intentions to holiday in Canada.

On that day and since, he and I received several telegrams from different tourism industry associations, including the Tourism Association of Canada and the Northwest Ontario Travel Association, saying that high gas prices are a problem. Will the Minister take some action to lower those prices, or will he continue to tell the industry that he knows their business, they don't, and "father knows best"?

Hon. Jack Murta (Minister of State (Tourism)): Mr. Speaker, studies conducted by both Tourism Canada and the tourist industry in the United States have indicated without a shadow of a doubt that the price of gasoline in Canada does not have a significant impact on an American's intention to travel in this country.

● (1440)

What we want to do and what we are doing in Tourism Canada is going out and raising the awareness of Canada in the U.S. market so that more people will come up into this country. The price of gasoline is not a factor.