

alone but to Canada, the entire nation? When will he start thinking of his national responsibilities and withdraw that disastrous policy?

[Translation]

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, once more I must remind the hon. member that while some American companies put out advertisements in Canadian newspapers, the Alberta government suggested in American newspaper advertisements put out recently that should it ever become impossible to become a millionaire in Alberta, then there would be no place in the world where it could happen. At all times there is advertising on that subject in newspapers of both countries, Canada and the United States. Coming to the hon. member's question, if the president of a bank makes a statement, I immediately react differently, and assume that the program must have some good points if it is a matter of concern to some bank presidents. And finally, I would remind the hon. member that the National Energy Program benefits all Canadians, and it is my view that we should not necessarily bow to some companies because they are now resorting to panic tactics.

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[English]

CANADA PENSION PLAN

POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF PLAN TO UNEMPLOYED PERSONS

Mr. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Madam Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare whether, in proceeding with the national pensions conference on March 31, an initiative for which we congratulate her and the government, she will also launch public consultation on the future of the Canada Pension Plan and, in particular, on how to open up the plan to persons who are not employed and who wish to contribute the full premium on their own, thus permitting entry to hundreds of thousands of Canadians who presently cannot do so?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Yes, Madam Speaker, we intend to do that. We have announced that we are looking into ways, for instance, of collecting moneys from people, housewives and the handicapped, who are not in the labour market and who could and do want to contribute to the Canada Pension Plan. There are, of course, technical problems to resolve. For instance, at what amount shall we attribute a value to their work for defining the contributions, and so on and so forth? This will be discussed further throughout the country. It is not, however, a specific item. It is not the focus of the conference in late March but it will be touched upon. The focus of the conference is the reform of private pensions for all Canadians.

Oral Questions

ENERGY

INCREASED PRICES FOR GASOLINE AND DIESEL FUEL

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I must say, Madam Speaker, that it is no wonder we have tensions in this country, given the arrogance of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: A lot has been said about pricing. I should like to ask the minister how his government can justify the increase in the price of gasoline, the cost of which has risen by 30 cents per gallon since the defeat of our government. Farm diesel fuel has also increased in price by 30 cents per gallon since the defeat of our government, an increase of 50 per cent. On February 8, 1980, in a speech in Toronto the Prime Minister said that the price increase would be less than 14 cents per gallon.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I am glad that the hon. member wants to pay tribute to my well-known humility and flexibility. He does it in an offhanded way, but I understand his real feelings vis-à-vis my attitude are not what he said.

As far as the point raised in his question is concerned, I want to remind him that the total increases provided under the budget and since this government took office are considerably lower than those that had been foreseen in the budget brought down by his government.

An hon. Member: What are they?

Mr. Lalonde: In particular, there was no 18-cent tax. As far as the increases themselves are concerned, while the increase was to be \$4 for 1980 we managed to arrive at something below that figure for 1980, contrary to their last budget. So we have respected our commitment to the Canadian public that all our prices would be lower than those provided in the Conservative budget last year.

Mr. Mazankowski: Madam Speaker, that is absolutely incorrect. I would be pleased to produce invoices to substantiate the statements I have made. There is absolutely no question that the price of farm diesel fuel has risen by 50 per cent in this country. That contributes directly to the cost of producing food. There is no relief for pensioners, there is no relief for low-income people, and there is no relief for farmers. That is going to impact directly on the cost of food. What does the government intend to do about this in terms of living up to its commitment, particularly regarding its impact on the production price of food?

Mr. Lalonde: The government is indeed very concerned about the impact of higher prices for diesel and oil on the producers of food. That is why the government has refused to follow the line set up in the Conservative budget of 1979 which