

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I think what the people in Newfoundland want are jobs. It is jobs that will be created by the Newfoundland Accord, jobs will be created by the development of that resource, and jobs will be created by the policies of this Government which brought in the Newfoundland Accord, and which will bring the Hibernia oil field onstream.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT INSTRUCT PETRO-CANADA TO
REDUCE PRICES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Energy my question is also directed to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday his colleague said it will take months for Canadians to experience lower prices for gas which the Americans are now taking for granted. This delay is costing Canadian consumers \$8.5 million a day.

My question is this. Petro-Canada was created not to act like Shell, Gulf and Esso simply to maximize its profits. It was created to act in the consumers' interest as well. Will the Government use the authority it has and instruct Petro-Canada to bring down its prices now?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, deregulation, which was brought in by the Minister of Energy six or seven months ago, is designed to take advantage—

Mr. Marchi: Where did she go?

An Hon. Member: Oh, shut up.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): There is a cheap shot from the cheap seats in the back row.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member for York West, order, please.

Some Hon. Members: Go ahead, Mike.

Mr. Speaker: Supplementary question.

CABINET'S AUTHORITY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): The Minister chooses not to answer the first question. I will put another, but related, question to him. Section 7(2) of the Act set up to create Petro-Canada gives Cabinet the authority to instruct Petro-Canada how to behave. Therefore, will the Minister of Finance tell the House why Petro-Canada was instructed to maximize its profits instead of acting in consumer interests as well? Will he use that same authority in the Act to tell Petro-Canada to start acting in consumer interests and reduce its prices now?

● (1425)

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, Petro-Canada was taking \$300 million to \$400 million a year from the federal Treasury and we thought that was an exces-

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sive amount of money for that company to take. We told it to act as a commercial organization and that is what it is doing now.

I have been hearing from some of my constituents, and maybe the Hon. Member has been hearing the same thing from his constituents, that Petro-Canada is undercutting some of the oil companies in market pricing. Therefore, in some cases Petro-Canada is bringing the prices down, and I think the Hon. Member should be pleased with that.

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF PETRO-CANADA ACTIVITIES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same Minister, who knows perfectly well that Government instructions were the exact opposite. I want to ask the Minister why the Government asked Petro-Canada to model its activities on those of the multinationals in Canada instead of making decisions in the interests of Canadian consumers.

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the Hon. Member heard the answer to the first question. I will answer it again for his benefit.

Mr. Broadbent: I heard it.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I indicated that I have heard from a number of constituents that Petro-Canada has been undercutting the market and leading the price wars. Surely the Hon. Member should be pleased when that sort of activity takes place.

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TRADE

WATER RESOURCES—ALLEGED STATEMENT BY CANADIAN
NEGOTIATOR

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Mr. Simon Reisman, our chief negotiator with the United States, issued a statement to a *Vancouver Sun* reporter on Monday in which he once again reiterated his support for fresh water exports to the United States. In the statement he said: "I believed in it then, I believe in it now".

Why is Mr. Reisman still issuing public statements of this kind on such a very sensitive issue, knowing the important consequences it has for the discussions with the United States? Does he not believe that it seriously impairs the credibility of Mr. Reisman's role in negotiating a new trade agreement with the Americans?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am assured by Mr. Reisman's office that no such statement was issued.