Mr. MacLellan: Yes, crazed ambitions. The short-term reason, the Government says, is that it is not satisfied with the profit on the downstream activities of Petro-Canada. Yet this same company took over another company, Gulf Canada, which had a more successful downstream operation, and it is now preparing to get rid of the employees of Gulf Canada who were responsible for this more profitable downstream operation. It just does not make any sense, but then again the oil and gas policy of this Government does not make any sense.

The long-term reason for Petro-Canada increasing prices is that the Government wants to put Petro-Canada in as profitable a position as possible so that it can be privatized. When the shares are sold in the market they will be much more attractive because of this more profitable position of Petro-Canada. The Minister stated on television last evening that it was the Government's intention to privatize Petro-Canada but the Government says it does not know whom that will be. How does the Government expect to fool the Canadian public, by using their money? It is the public who is paying higher gasoline prices. It is the public's money that the Government is giving to the multinational oil companies by doing away with the PGRT. It is the public's $1 billion this Government is using to bail out bankrupt banks. If the Government continues this policy the public will be using their money to buy back from themselves their own Crown corporation. Given the economic difficulties being experienced by people in this country, this is not inequitable, it is immoral.

Higher gasoline prices do not hit just wealthy Canadians; they have a much greater effect on low-income Canadians. Increased prices are hitting very, very hard. Yet gasoline prices have been going down in all other parts of the western world for months.

It is unfortunate, but the Government's policies are having a very derogatory effect on Canadians' opinion of Petro-Canada. Canadians know that Petro-Canada is the leader in these price increases. As a result, they are developing a more jaundiced attitude towards this Crown corporation. What they saw as a very positive step, a most encouraging beginning, has now become a nightmare. The Canadian consumer is being consumed by the policies of this Government through this Crown corporation being used in this way. How long can this go on? How long can Canadians continue to pay these prices? We have been told by the Minister that the world-wide reductions in the price of oil will be passed along to the consumer. We do not know how long that is going to take or to what extent the price reductions will be passed along. Why? Because we do not know whether the oil companies are going to give the full benefit of these reductions to the consumer or whether they are going to increase their margins. We certainly do not know what the Government is going to do with respect to its tax policy regarding gasoline. However, we do know that if the price of gasoline went up, consumers would be paying more tomorrow. There would not be any of this waiting for two or three months until they use up their present reserves and then pass along the increase to consumers. Oh, no, that only applies when the price goes down. When it goes up, the increase is passed along to consumers the next day. That is not what we had in mind when Petro-Canada was formed.

The Government has told us that we should not complain about higher oil and gas prices because the Husky upgrader, the Hibernia field and the Venture deal are at stake. The Government is saying it needs these higher prices so it can pass along the profits in order to develop these projects. People may have believed that story last spring when the Western Accord was signed, but to give out that same story a second time as being the reason for higher gasoline prices is just not going to wash anywhere in this country. It is time for the Government to come clean with Canadians and admit that the reason it is letting prices go up is that it wants to do away with Petro-Canada, privatize it and make it look as good as possible with regard to profits so that it can get the best possible price for a private issue of shares. Also, the Government has made a commitment to the multinationals, the major players in the oil and gas industry, that they will be looked after.

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The Government has not given that same assurance to consumers recently as it did during the election campaign. During the election campaign, that was only one of many promises that the Government made to the people of Canada. The Government has not made that promise lately because it knows that even it cannot give that kind of assurance with the picture so grossly balanced in favour of the companies and against consumers.

This is becoming a major question in the country at the present time. Consumers are angry. They are furious with the Government, not only because of the higher prices or because the Government led them believe one thing and then did another, but because the Government is now insulting their intelligence by dragging out the same answers that it dragged out last year and the year before during the election campaign. The Government is telling Canadian consumers that it is giving them the right answers and they should believe them. However, not only are the Canadian consumers not believing but, with each maladjusted reason that the Government brings forward, the hypocrisy of the Government, its lack of concern for consumers, and the complete loss of confidence of the Canadian public in the Government becomes more apparent.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, would the previous speaker give us an indication of what the effect on taxpayers will be if the revenue from the PGRT is removed? Would he give an indication of the type of thing that will happen to Government services and the type of thing that will happen to the tax burden on people in Canada and, in particular, in the region of the country which he represents, because of this ill-conceived plan of the Government?

Mr. MacLellan: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to do that. By 1990 the reduction of the PGRT will cost the Canadian taxpayer between $2 billion and $3 billion in taxes, which the multinationals, the oil and gas producers, will no longer have to pay and which will be passed along to the Canadian