

Oral Questions

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): That is probably the best advertising in the world for those particular positions, Mr. Speaker. I would say, that, most assuredly, if there are people prepared to work in that field whose salary expectations are too high, immigrants will be welcomed. But I would wish to check the facts the hon. member has given us.

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CORPORATE AFFAIRS

INCREASED TRADING IN SHARES OF HUSKY OIL

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Is the minister aware of any investigation or inquiry by the federal government into the source of increased trading, at obviously increased prices, in the shares of Husky Oil of Canada prior to the initial release and publicity surrounding the original offer of Petro-Canada to purchase those shares?

Hon. Warren Allmand (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): No, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of any such investigation. However, as the hon. member knows, the director of research under the Combines Investigation Act sometimes carries out investigations on his own initiative or at the request of six citizens. I will check with him to see whether such an investigation is under way or is proposed.

Mr. Lawrence: I understand the minister is wearing two hats this morning; that he is acting solicitor general. I ask whether he is aware of any federal investigation into this whole matter, bearing in mind that provincial investigators might not have the jurisdiction needed to seek answers from departments of the federal government? In this case, not only was the offer known to Petro-Canada but details of it were intimately known to officials right in the office of the Prime Minister, as in the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources; so there might well be a need for a federal investigation. Does the minister know of any such investigation by the law enforcement agencies?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Acting Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, as Acting Solicitor General I have noted the hon. member's questions and representations. I will bring them to the attention of my colleague.

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PETRO-CANADAPOSSIBLE CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN CONNECTION WITH
HUSKY OIL TAKEOVER

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It relates to the disclosure that Mr. Ward C. Pitfield was, at the time of the initial negotiations, a director

[Mr. Herbert.]

of Husky Oil while at the same time acting as an adviser to Petro-Can. I have a simple question for the minister. Was Petro-Can aware of this conflict of interest at the time of appointing the investment counselling firm as the agent of Petro-Can?

● (1152)

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am not prepared to accept the allegation that there was a conflict of interest. That is something for the director himself to consider. The decision to engage the company, of which he was a member, and the other agents acting for Petro-Can was made by management and the board of directors of Petro-Can. They were seeking the best in the business.

GOVERNMENT KNOWLEDGE OF POSSIBLE CONFLICT OF
INTEREST

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): My supplementary question is to the Prime Minister, whose office has a direct liaison with Petro-Can in the negotiations for the acquisition of Husky Oil Limited shares. In view of the fact that the Prime Minister and his office has a personal interest in the negotiations for the acquisition, did they take time out to consider what particular qualifications Mr. Ward C. Pitfield, of Pitfield, Mackay Ross Limited, had for acting as agent in this connection, and did they satisfy themselves with regard to any potential conflict of interest of this investment counselling firm when making the appointment of that firm on behalf of Petro-Can?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, on the substance of the question, I can only repeat exactly what the minister has just said. In so far as the allegation is concerned that there is a particular link between my office and Petro-Can, of course that is not true.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PARITY OF NATO AND WARSAW PACT FORCES

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. There have been reports, of apparent authenticity, which indicate that the U.S.S.R. has proposed to accept parity of forces in Europe which would involve reduction in the Warsaw Pact forces to a greater extent than any NATO reduction. I should like to ask the minister, who is responsible for Canada's participation at the Vienna conference on mutual and balanced force reductions, to confirm or deny this report, if he can.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm it in general terms. There has been a proposal by the Soviet Union with regard to force reductions in the context of the MBFR discussions. It is a