

Oral Questions

fact that the Quebec government has not yet declared itself in favour of the building of an oil pipeline partly explains the delay in the implementation of this project?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): No, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Quebec premier has declared himself in favour of the building of such a pipeline. I think that his provincial colleagues are now obviously in favour of such a pipeline.

[English]

OIL PIPELINE EXTENSION TO MONTREAL—PLACING OF
SURVEY CONTRACTS

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and it follows up a question I asked him yesterday as to what specific group in the government is negotiating with Interprovincial Pipelines. My question today is this. Since there is only one person in this group, namely, the Deputy Minister of National Defence, it may be that part of his responsibilities is delaying the negotiations. Is he asking this company with which he is negotiating that all contracts for surveys be done through firms in Montreal?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): No, Mr. Speaker, that is not a consideration at all.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will recognize the hon. member for a supplementary and then the right hon. member for Prince Albert.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Is there anybody else in this group with Mr. Cloutier who has responsibility for putting forward these ideas?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Cloutier has been carrying on the discussions but in this regard he has, of course, been conferring with representatives of the National Energy Board and of my own department. With regard to the details of the construction work, in particular the contracting out of surveys and so on, in the normal course this would be arranged between the pipeline company, if indeed it is to be the Interprovincial Pipelines, and the individual surveyors concerned.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, may I ask one further question for clarification purposes. Is the minister receiving any complaints in regard to pressure being exerted on them to let their contracts to Montreal firms?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Certainly I have not received any complaints from Interprovincial Pipelines. The position has been taken by the Association of Consulting Engineers of Canada that, to the greatest extent possible, Canadian engineering talent should be used in extending this pipeline. This seems to me to be a reasonable objective on the part of the engineering profession in this country generally, bearing in mind, however, the importance of speed in this particular case.

[Mr. Graftey.]

INCOME TAX

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION TO ENSURE CONFIDENTIALITY
OF RETURNS IN LIGHT OF FEDERAL COURT JUDGMENT

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Finance a question regarding the recent judgment of the Federal Court of Canada which indicated that the belief we have all had, that income tax returns are confidential has no basis in fact and is a myth. In view of that judgment, and of the concern of the millions of Canadians who pay income tax that their returns should not be available for inspection or examination, would the minister consider bringing in legislation that would definitely assure the taxpayers of this country that they will not be, as far as their returns are concerned, put into a goldfish bowl where what they have stated therein confidentially can become public information?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the right hon. gentleman for bringing this matter to my attention earlier by way of notice. May I say to him that I share his concern about the implications of the recent decision of the Federal Court of Canada. Frankly, I would operate from the general principle that information given to government for one confidential purpose should not be used for another purpose. Particularly in income tax matters, where our system is based upon the principle of voluntary assessment and confidential disclosure, this becomes even more important. I have discussed this matter with my colleague, the Minister of Justice, and we will see what remedy need be taken.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

RAPIDO TRAIN SERVICE BETWEEN TORONTO AND
MONTREAL—REQUEST THAT MINISTER INTERVENE TO
PREVENT CANCELLATION

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In view of the present energy crisis, and in view of the fact the House is presently debating the annual CNR financing bill, will the minister request Canadian National Railways not to carry out its intention to cancel, effective the day after tomorrow, the Rapido train service between Toronto and Montreal?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I can discuss this problem with the president of the CNR. They made the first decision without consulting the department. I presume they would like to make a second one, but I should like to discuss the matter in the meantime.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that both trains have been carrying capacity or near capacity loads, and in view of the fact the Turbo leaves Montreal at 4.30 p.m. and the Rapido leaves at 4.31 p.m., would the minister request Canadian National Railways not only to retain the Rapido but to have it leave Montreal in the morning rather than at the same time as the Turbo train?