

answered his question at a later date I indicated that within the time frame of some two weeks to a month we hoped to get out the remainder of those refunds to which people were entitled. I believe members are finding that usually by the time an inquiry is made of my office and an answer is given by the computer the refund in question has already gone out.

Mr. Hees: That just shows how slow you are.

Mr. Stanbury: I do not think the premise of the hon. member's question is correct since I am advised that more refunds, worth more, have been sent out this year than ever before at this date.

Mr. Hales: I might point out that my own personal records indicate that 55 per cent of the inquiries I have referred to the minister's office have not yet produced refunds.

Mr. Stanbury: Mr. Speaker, I do not think that is quite correct either. The hon. member holds the record for the number of inquiries he has asked my office to make, but he must realize, as other hon. members must, that every time we have to make an investigation of the status of a particular return the processing of other returns is slowed down.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanbury: I might also point out that he is not correct in saying only 55 per cent of the people about whom he has inquired have received their refunds. He would be correct if he says that those are the refunds that we have been able to confirm so far which have in fact gone out, but others may well have gone out—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* * *

ENERGY

INTENTION OF MINISTER RESPECTING REVIEW OF GAS EXPORT CONTRACTS IN LIGHT OF PRICE

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Since it appears we are not going to have a statement on a national energy policy for at least a year, may I ask the minister what action he proposes to take in the meantime with respect to a number of pressing energy matters now confronting the country? In particular, I want to ask him about the fact that gas exported from Canada is underpriced, as established in the resources committee and as now corroborated by the report his department is releasing today. Is it the intention of the minister to have these gas export contracts reviewed with a view to bringing the prices into line with competitive fuels?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): In fact, Mr. Speaker, the contracts are now under review by the National Energy Board and in some cases there has already been an increase in the return on export contracts.

Oral Questions

POSTPONEMENT OF APPROVAL OF ANY MACKENZIE VALLEY GAS PIPELINE APPLICATION UNTIL NATIONAL POLICY ANNOUNCED

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In view of the fact the minister has repeatedly stated that the National Energy Board would be prepared to entertain applications for the construction of a gas pipeline down the Mackenzie Valley, mainly for supplying gas to American consumers, may I ask the minister whether he intends to restrict or postpone approval of such a project until such time as he brings down a national energy policy so the country will know what gas reserves are available for the Canadian people?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I should remind the hon. gentleman that we do, of course, have a policy in effect now with regard to natural gas, and that assessments have been made as to what gas is surplus to Canadian requirements. Indeed, one of the elements involved in the hearing process, as required by the National Energy Board Act, is to make a determination at that point in time as to what is surplus to Canada's requirements. So in that sense the hearing process itself will provide the fact finding to which I think the hon. gentlemen is referring.

DETERMINATION OF SURPLUS GAS AND OIL SUPPLIES FOR EXPORT—MAINTENANCE OF CONTROLS UNTIL NATIONAL POLICY ANNOUNCED

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In view of the fact the minister's deputy stated yesterday that Canada is prepared to export oil and gas that is surplus to its reasonable and foreseeable requirements, may I ask the minister how he and his department can determine what supplies are surplus on the basis of being reasonable and foreseeable until he brings down a statement on national energy policy? In short, will the present export controls be continued, will they be enlarged, will they be reduced, or will the status quo be maintained until he brings down a national energy policy in 1974?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the present export decision will be made if the facts indicate that there is indeed a surplus to our reasonable requirements. As the hon. member will find if he looks at the record, this is, in effect, one of the functions of the National Energy Board, namely, to determine whether there is a surplus. This has always been its policy, and that is what it did in November, 1971. When it is not satisfied there is a surplus, of course there is no additional export.

[Translation]

NATURAL GAS—DISCOVERIES ON KING CHRISTIAN AND MELVILLE ISLANDS—PROPOSAL RESPECTING TRANSPORT TO EASTERN QUEBEC AND UNITED STATES

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question.

I would like to ask the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources whether Panarctic Oils Ltd. have completed their study about gas discoveries on King Christian and