

*Inquiries of the Ministry***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD****OIL****PROPOSED MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE—DECISION OF GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT CONSTRUCTION APPLICATIONS**

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the statement made outside the House in another city by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development that the government is ready at any time to accept applications for building pipelines from the Arctic down the Mackenzie Valley, I should like to ask the Acting Prime Minister when it became government policy to accept such applications at any time.

Hon. Arthur Laing (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman knows, there have been a series of studies of the ecological requirements. We have spent a great deal of money and a great deal of time as well as a great amount of human resources on such studies. We have come to the conclusion that at the present time these studies have proceeded to the point where we are prepared to extend an invitation to corporations or government agencies to build a pipeline in that area on the basis that we can thereafter establish the necessary requirements in respect of the ecological necessities based upon the studies we already have.

Mr. Stanfield: May I ask the Acting Prime Minister when the government reached the decision that the ecological studies have proceeded far enough that the government is now prepared to receive such applications in view of the repeated statement by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in the House that the government expected to be in a position to receive such applications by the end of the year?

Mr. Laing: I think the Minister of the Environment might answer this question more capably than I.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): Or any other question.

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): As the hon. member knows, we do have a three-year study under way costing approximately \$13 million—

Mr. Lewis: \$15 million.

Mr. Davis:—which began 18 months ago. As the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has said, we believe that by this fall we will have enough background information to prepare ecological maps for the north. We will not have all the information we need by this fall but we think we will have sufficient information to reach definitive conclusions as to pipeline routing in 1973. Meanwhile, of course, the oil and gas companies are themselves collecting a great deal of biological and other information which they will include in their submissions when they apply to the National Energy Board.

Mr. Stanfield: Perhaps the Acting Prime Minister could explain to the House how it is that the new position taken by the government of Canada, of which we heard for the

[Mr. Speaker.]

first time yesterday, that it is now prepared to receive applications for an oil line down the Mackenzie Valley has only been announced after the United States announced that it is going to authorize construction of the Alaska pipeline involving shipment down the west coast. Would the minister try to give some explanation in reply to that question?

Mr. Laing: Mr. Speaker, I do not agree that the open invitation was extended only after the announcement of Mr. Morton.

Mr. Stanfield: That was the first time we heard of the policy.

Mr. Laing: Included in the letter which the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources wrote to Mr. Morton was an invitation, because he said there should be no reason why regulatory and governmental considerations could not be given in an expeditious manner commencing with an application filed by the end of this year.

Mr. Stanfield: Yes, by the end of this year.

Mr. Laing: This is indicative and confirms what I have been saying, that the studies we have undertaken thus far indicate to us the requirements that we are going to make when an application is made.

Mr. Stanfield: Tell that to the marines!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is obviously debate at this point. The hon. member for Skeena on a supplementary.

PROPOSED TAPS TANKER ROUTE—ACTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF PAISH STUDY RESPECTING POSSIBLE OIL SPILLS

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of the Environment. Inasmuch as it appears that the United States Department of the Interior has determined that it is favourable to the Alaska pipeline and the tanker route down the west coast and that this route is the one that will be used, can the Minister of the Environment say what steps the government is taking, and when, to put into effect the recommendations of the Howard Paish and Associates study, released by the minister a few days ago, which relate to protecting us from oil spills that might take place?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): The study to which the hon. member refers makes explicit the threat to Canada of large tankers moving into the inland sea between Vancouver Island and the mainland. We have been working closely with the Department of Transport and with our opposite numbers in the United States to endeavour to establish a scheme to ensure safety of navigation and to deal with oil spills. At the same time we do not want to appear to accept the inevitability of tankers moving into the Puget Sound area. We are determined that this not be the case.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): The minister very adroitly evaded the question. I asked him what steps he is taking to prepare for putting into effect the recommendations of