

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Dupras:** Madam Speaker, my question is this: I would like to know whether the opposition parties have agreed to a pairing system or any other arrangement which would allow hon. members from the province of Quebec to be more active and more present in the province during the referendum campaign?

**Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council):** Madam Speaker, it is true that we face a double task in the next few weeks: to deal with an extensive legislative program while at the same time getting involved in and supporting the No forces during the referendum campaign in Quebec.

Personally, Madam Speaker, I am confident that all members of the House will be willing to dispose of the accumulated legislative work in a spirit of co-operation and good will, as required by His Excellency the Governor General in the Speech from the Throne. In any case, negotiations have already been initiated with the parliamentary leaders of the opposition parties, and I am confident that satisfying agreements will be reached, enabling us to deal with the House legislative program within reasonable time while at the same time finding ways to allow hon. members, particularly those from Quebec, to go campaigning. This would be done by postponing votes, if need be, or by organizing the work in such a way that we can contribute, directly or indirectly, to the success of the No forces in Quebec and ensure the unity of Canada.

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[English]

**ENERGY**

## EXPORT OF NATURAL GAS TO UNITED STATES

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Madam Speaker, I want to return to the matter of energy self-sufficiency and put a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I think the minister might agree with me that one way to energy self-sufficiency might be to keep our natural gas for our own use.

● (1150)

When he was the Liberal opposition energy critic, he told this House that exports of natural gas to the United States should not be authorized unless there is an ironclad commitment regarding the building of the whole Alaska gas pipeline: those were the minister's words. Now that he is in a position to do something about that, could he tell this House what he meant by "an ironclad commitment?"

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Madam Speaker, I had a meeting with the Secretary of Energy from the United States very shortly after my appointment. I reviewed the whole situation with him. I passed

on to the American authorities the concern of this government about the delays that were being faced concerning the firm and final decision by the United States authorities on the construction of the Alaska gas pipeline. The Secretary of Energy of the United States indicated that his government now was convinced that the project should go, and that he was pushing very strongly with the private partners in the United States who are responsible for the project, so that this project indeed proceeds.

Very shortly, I am meeting—tomorrow, I believe—with one of the main private sponsors in the United States about this particular project in order to get a full report of the most recent meeting which has taken place. I am keeping very much on top of this question in order to be fully aware of developments, and the government will have to make a decision later on.

**Mr. Waddell:** Madam Speaker, let me remind the minister that Parliament put an ironclad guarantee into the Northern Pipeline Act of 1978 when Parliament indicated that one cannot prebuild this pipeline without an ironclad guarantee of financing. Yet last week the minister's government allowed the National Energy Board to open up this whole question and to open up the possibility of the pipeline company prebuilding without that guarantee.

Before there is any change in the Northern Pipeline Act, before he lets them prebuild the southern portion and take Canadian gas to the Americans without a guarantee of the northern portion being built, will the minister assure the House that he will come back to the House and get permission from the House of Commons to make any changes to that act?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lalonde:** Madam Speaker, no change has been made to the Northern Pipeline Act, and obviously no change would be made to the act without coming to Parliament. What the National Energy Board is doing at the present time is holding hearings under the authority the Energy Board has under legislation passed by Parliament.

## NEB REVIEW OF GAS EXPORT DECISION

**Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon):** Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. On December 7, 1979, he described the gas export decision of the National Energy Board, and I quote him, "as one of the biggest sellouts in Canadian history".

**An hon. Member:** Right on.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Nielsen:** Does he still hold that view and if he does, is it an explanation of why he is using the Energy Board to review this matter, for the purpose of saving his own face with respect to that statement?