

*Oral Questions*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Could the minister answer more briefly and refrain from reading long quotations.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Madam Speaker, I very rarely abuse the rules and I have almost finished:

If it is related to the referendum, I would say "Good!" and I suppose you would say "Too bad!". However, this is in a context which is—

**Madam Speaker:** Order. The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway.

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● (1440)

[English]

**ENERGY****NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD APPROVAL OF NATURAL GAS EXPORTS**

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Perhaps I can call him what Vancouver journalists called him, "the charming minister, the charming member".

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

**Mr. Waddell:** He will need all his charm. Yesterday, the National Energy Board approved the export of enough natural gas to finance prebuilding the southern portions of the Alaska Highway gas pipeline, thereby making a complete farce of its own hearings on the prebuild.

My question is this: In view of the fact that the National Energy Board has obviously prejudged the issue, can the minister assure the House that he will stand by his own position of last December 6 when he stated in the House that such exports would amount to—and I use his words—"the greatest sellout in Canadian history"?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Madam Speaker, I would refer the hon. member to a press release which I issued yesterday following the statement by the National Energy Board, in which I indicated that this report by the Energy Board "did not imply that the government was now prepared to approve new gas exports". This matter will be decided by cabinet—

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** When?

**Mr. Lalonde:** In due time, after we have had further consideration of this whole issue. More particularly, the "key factor in the ultimate decision will be the status of the Alaska sections of the pipeline". This is all in the press release which was issued yesterday, and we stand by the position we have taken.

**Mr. Waddell:** Madam Speaker, I have a supplementary question. The Minister also said to the press yesterday, and I will use his words, that "Canada was taking every step possible to pave the way for prebuilding the project". Senator Olson,

who is also responsible in this matter, has approved equipment purchases for the project. On April 21, in Calgary, he said that he expected legislative authority or legislation in this House within the next three to five weeks, and in the Senate yesterday he said that he was prepared to agree to the prebuilding, this summer, of a portion of the project.

My supplementary question is this, first of all: Who is right? Has the minister made a decision, or not? Is Senator Olson right, or is the minister right? Further, did Senator Olson's statements mean that the Government of Canada has received assurances from the government of the United States that the whole Alaskan gas pipeline can be built?

**Mr. Lalonde:** Madam Speaker, I am afraid that the hon. member is trying to introduce confusion where there is none. When he quoted that excerpt from my press release, he could have gone on to read as follows:

—Canada was taking every possible step to pave the way for prebuilding the southern sections, and that it was now incumbent on the United States to do the same by demonstrating that the northern sections of the pipeline and the entire project would be completed in an expeditious and timely manner.

This is the position of this government and all ministers of this government.

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[Translation]

**THE CONSTITUTION****INQUIRY WHETHER DRAFT AMENDMENTS WILL BE SUBMITTED TO PROVINCES**

**Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister. Like many other Canadians, he is surely aware of the attitude of several of his provincial counterparts with regard to the status quo or sovereignty, because rejection of both options manifests itself in the same way. In the context of his new federalism, is the right hon. Prime Minister in a position to say, with a view to throwing some light on the subject for thousands of Canadians, whether that attitude goes to the point of intending to submit the draft of a new constitution to the provinces?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** If it could induce the hon. member for Joliette into joining the No forces, I should be tempted to say yes.

**Mr. La Salle:** Madam Speaker, you will understand that it is clearly not enough to convince those who are tempted to vote yes at the present time, to hear the right hon. Prime Minister refuse to throw some light on the matter. It is obvious the premiers—and they are people with responsibilities—want a meeting to be convened shortly after the referendum, regardless of its results. It is obvious that the federal government will also have to discuss the matter with the Quebec government. Can the right hon. Prime Minister say whether he intends to submit the draft of a new constitution, which would be of