

*Oral Questions*

[English]

## ROLE OF NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD—SURPLUS TEST

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys):** Mr. Speaker, my question is likewise directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and these documents he does have. In a speech in St. John's on October 8 the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said: "Those who do not understand think that the National Energy Board will be reduced to a monitoring function". If they do think that, they come by it honestly because in the document the Government handed out, in the preliminary transcript, it says:

With respect to existing measures, Canada has agreed to (1) limit the application of its "surplus test" for energy exports to a monitoring function—

Does the Minister know what he is doing? Does he have any idea what the Government is giving away to the United States? If he does, will he come clean with the Canadian people?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, under the agreement, the National Energy Board will continue to receive export applications. The Board will still have the power to refuse an export permit or to reduce, under certain circumstances provided by the agreement, the quantities shipped abroad, in case of a shortage, for instance, or if it becomes necessary to implement an export reduction policy. This is exactly what the National Energy Board can do right now.

However, Mr. Speaker, this Government has provided de-regulation of the energy sector quite apart and independently from the free trade agreement. It is in the framework of this de-regulation that the discretionary powers, or rather the powers of intervention of the National Energy Board could be changed, amended or suspended according to the marketing policy of the Government.

● (1440)

[English]

## DISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

**Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys):** Mr. Speaker, the National Energy Board has no power to protect the energy requirements of the Canadian people. Because of the proportionality in the preliminary agreement, a certain percentage of energy has to go to the United States—

**Mr. Shields:** Not true!

**Mr. MacLellan:** Yes, it does. In relation to the percentage that was sent to the United States in the preceding three years, the United States has the right to that same percentage at that particular time. There is nothing the National Energy Board or the Government will be able to do after the agreement is signed.

Why are the Minister and the Government sending letters all over Canada with misinformation which is misleading the Canadian people, information that is directly contrary to what is set forth in the Government's own preliminary agreement?

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

[Translation]

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I read this morning the article reporting the heated comments of my hon. colleague. I believe that if anyone lacks any credibility in his analysis, it is the Hon. Member sitting on the other side of the House.

I can assure the Hon. Member that the major concern of this Government is to provide security of supply for the Canadian public. In this context, the free trade agreement will allow greater and more dependable development of our natural resources. Canadians will enjoy better security of supply under this agreement than with the policies of the previous Government, which brought Alberta to the brink of bankruptcy.

[English]

## PROVINCES' RIGHT TO DETERMINE PRICES

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, that was a fascinating attempt to avoid the issue on the part of the Minister of Energy. I wish to ask the Minister this question. The fact is that right now the provinces have the right to sell to their own consumers energy at lower prices than if they export it. Will that right continue, yes or no?

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

[Translation]

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, this is a clear and specific question and the answer is in the Canadian Constitution which confers certain powers to the provinces.

## REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF PROVINCES' POWERS TO SELL ENERGY AT LOWER PRICE TO LOCAL CONSUMERS

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, how very interesting that the Minister should choose not to answer in the House. So again I will ask the question, hoping to get an answer.

Can the Minister tell us what powers the provinces now have to sell energy at lower price to local consumers? Will such powers continue to exist?

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, provincial powers and responsibilities with respect to natural resources stem from Canada's constitutional text. Nothing in the free trade agreement changes that or leads the Government to believe that it will be necessary to amend the Canadian Constitution.