

Oral Questions

Canada to be self-sufficient, and helping to protect Canadians from the vagaries of insecure international supplies?

[Translation]

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is losing his proverbial self-control simply on the basis of sheer speculations. This government's policy is based on reality and facts. The facts are there to demonstrate that there was much more exploration this year than the previous year, and that before making final decisions the industry will clearly want to know the energy policy of the government which will be made public within two weeks. The industry will come to the decision it considers appropriate at that time. Meanwhile, I think that my hon. colleague would have everything to gain by setting aside his bitterness for another moment. I think that at the present time he is simply speculating.

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● (1130)

[English]

NATIONAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC WORKS

ATTENDANCE OF MINISTER AT STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Will the minister reconsider his absolute refusal to appear before the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works prior to announcing or publishing the energy policy of the government and prior to the budget, so that members of the House of Commons can discharge their duties and represent the people to the minister? To paraphrase the minister's own word, I think he will find that we are not unreasonable; we just want to sit down and express some of our concerns to which he is obviously not listening.

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, without hesitation I should like to indicate to my hon. colleague that I have listened most attentively to the views expressed by hon. members. Several debates have already been held in the House over the past few months on the energy issue. One was held as recently as last Tuesday in which I participated and during which I heard the various representations of hon. members. I should like also to indicate to my hon. colleague that if any hon. member of the opposition has particular views to express on this matter, I would be delighted to meet with them. I can say that I have discussed this matter abundantly in the past with the government caucus and that I will have many opportunities to discuss it again with them until the budget comes down. If other hon. members have views they would like to convey to me, I should be happy to receive them too. As to a formal appearance before the committee, I have already agreed to appear, I think, on November 4, that is, as soon as I possibly can after the

government's energy policy is released, to explain this policy and answer any question hon. members may care to ask on a precise and definite program. In the meantime, however, I think the best approach during the coming week is to make myself available to all hon. members who may want to advise me of their views on this matter.

[English]

Mr. Shields: Madam Speaker, we are looking for a skating expert to come to Fort McMurray to teach skating lessons, and I think we have just heard from one.

An hon. Member: Fancy skating.

Mr. Shields: My supplementary question is directed to the minister. The minister indicated that he is prepared to meet with hon. members at this time, and to sit down and hear their views. Will the minister meet with the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works before the budget comes down and before the energy policy comes out? The members of this committee have been doing a great deal of work. We have toured all the tar sands facilities in northeastern Alberta. We have read volumes of material. Last night we listened to a presentation by the Alsands consortium.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, I am extremely happy the members of the committee have done a number of things I have done over the last several months.

Mr. Nielsen: The Liberals walked out.

Mr. Lalonde: I am glad we will have a very knowledgeable committee on national resources which will be examining our energy policy. I welcome this.

Mr. Clark: Why did the Liberals walk out?

Mr. Lalonde: We have had many debates in this House. Members of the House have had plenty of opportunity to make representations as to what the policies of the government should be. If my hon. friend wishes to make additional representations, I am at his disposal at any time.

As far as meeting with the committee as such is concerned, I indicated that I thought it was preferable to do so after the budget and after the release of our energy statement, when I will be in a position to answer all questions of hon. members in a very specific and detailed way. That will begin on November 4.

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BANK OF CANADA

INQUIRY RESPECTING ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIME RATE

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Will the minister explain to the House, if he knows, what goes on in the mind of the governor of the Bank of Canada as he sits down to set the