

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** Will this new corporation be empowered to ensure future petroleum supplies for the maritimes? Will it be able to enter into arrangements with Petro-Canada to prevent the kind of high-handed, unconscionable acts of diversion attempted by Exxon and its Canadian puppet, Imperial Oil?

**Mr. MacKay:** Read the bill.

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of State for Science and Technology):** Mr. Speaker, I believe the Maritime Energy Corporation will be an extremely important corporation to the maritimes and to Canada. Quite clearly, it is placing collective and joint action ahead of the earlier "go it alone" policy. I believe because the corporation will be working with the three maritime provinces and the federal government together, it will be possible to establish a secured energy source for the maritimes and increasingly build upon the indigenous energy sources of the maritimes. Therefore the maritimes will become less vulnerable and less dependent on foreign oil.

As hon. members know, foreign oil is used for some of the electrical generation in the maritimes. I believe that the Maritime Energy Corporation will, over a period of time, make the maritimes less dependent on imported oil.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to that nonsense.

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

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands.

## MINISTER'S KNOWLEDGE OF OIL SHIPMENT DIVERSIONS

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Last Friday, the minister told the House that he knew nothing of the diversion from Canada by Exxon of some 25,000 barrels of Venezuelan oil. Saturday's paper contains a reply from Imperial Oil Company as follows:

A company spokesman said a senior energy department official knew of the plan on January 24, as did the National Energy Board.

This is in direct contradiction of the minister's statement that he knew nothing about the matter until February 8. In view of the very serious nature of this apparent contradiction, has the minister investigated which senior departmental official received this information? If he knows who it was, has that official been removed, since it is the very height of incompetence that important information like that should have been kept from the minister for two solid weeks?

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

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of State for Science and Technology):**

Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member may be overstating the situation by attaching more importance than it deserves to the allegation as reported in the press. I believe that there was some preliminary discussion in the sense that it was possible that a situation could develop with respect to diversionary tactics. I think that information may well have been conveyed to my department at one time.

The hon. member is right when he says that on January 24 there was a letter that went—I believe from Imperial Oil—to the National Energy Board dealing with a diversionary plan, or some words to that effect. But the hon. member also knows, of course, that the National Energy Board is an independent board. The National Energy Board makes its own decisions and takes its own counsel in these matters. There is no reason for the National Energy Board, for example, to seek my advice on this or ask me to sign or agree to any measures of this kind; nor did they.

**Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the National Energy Board is not only a regulatory body, but under the terms of its act it is the minister's adviser on energy matters and therefore it is taken for granted that there is a constant and continuing liaison between the minister's office and the National Energy Board in order that the minister may be aware of what is happening, and in view of the fact that a curtailment of 25,000 barrels a day constituted a serious threat to the well-being of many Canadians, will the minister explain why it was that the information which was passed, not only to a senior official but also to the National Energy Board, was not conveyed to him? Either there has been a gross dereliction of duty or the minister has been incompetent in conducting the affairs of his department.

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

**An hon. Member:** Both.

**Mr. Gillespie:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member refers to information which was conveyed to the National Energy Board. It is not at all clear, as I had an opportunity just recently—within the past few hours—to read that particular information. They were not talking about 25,000 barrels a day. That does not come across at all. If one looks at that particular submission, it comes across somewhere in the order of about 10,000 barrels a day. It was not until January 8, that I have mentioned—the Thursday—that a delegation from Imperial Oil came to see me and presented to me, in my office, this plan about the 25,000 or 30,000 barrels a day. To the best of my knowledge, that was the first I ever heard of it. I told them it was quite unacceptable. The date was Thursday, February 8.

● (1450)

## INQUIRY WHETHER DREE REPRESENTED IN MARITIME ENERGY CORPORATION

**Mr. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury):** Mr. Speaker, my question relates to the Maritime Energy Corporation. Is DREE to be represented in the newly-formed Maritime