

Oral Questions

● (1430)

[Translation]

ENERGY**INQUIRY AS TO DATE OF ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL ENERGY BANK**

Mr. Fabien Roy (Beauce): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the right hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, at the first ministers' conference which met here in Ottawa on November 12 last, the Prime Minister proposed the establishment of a national energy bank. Over the weekend, in Quebec City, the Prime Minister said he would keep his promise. Today, I should like to ask him, for the benefit of the House and the Canadian people, first, when that project will be put before the House; second, who will finance that bank and, third, whether the oil companies will have to participate in it?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is a serious question and I appreciate it very much. I intend to discuss the establishment of a Canadian energy bank with the provincial premiers here on December 17 and 18. We have already had general discussions with them in this regard but, as the hon. member knows, the government hopes that Canada can have such an institution in which not only the federal government would participate but also some of the provinces; if the provinces participate, it would be appropriate for them to take part in drafting the terms of reference of that bank.

With regard to the funds, they would be collected through federal taxes. We intend to channel all the funds provided by new taxes to oil companies; we want to channel them to the Canadian energy bank and other energy projects. We hope it will be possible for some of the provinces to contribute to it financially.

As for the third part of the question dealing with the participation of the companies, we intend to have the Canadian energy bank give special assistance to those Canadian companies that want to participate in the development of Canadian natural resources.

INQUIRY WHETHER AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE CONCLUDED WITH CERTAIN PROVINCES

Mr. Fabien Roy (Beauce): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister has had talks with the provincial governments. I would like to know whether his proposal or at least its basic principle has been accepted by some of them. Further, I would like to ask him whether the oil companies will be obliged to deposit in the Canadian energy bank the profits accruing from the price increases or if the government only intends to get that money through the tax system. In other words, I would like to know whether the increases—

Mr. Rodriguez: Keeping in mind that steel mills in Canada are operating at or near 100 per cent capacity, and that it is the density of foreign ownership of our resources and the vertical integration of monopolies in the iron mining and steel industries in Canada that are resulting in the replacement of Canadian iron ore production by foreign imports, can the Prime Minister tell us whether his government is prepared to take steps to rationalize the iron and steel industry so that Canadians can get the maximum benefits from their resources?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the claim of the hon. member to absolute authority in relation to anything touching on cuckoos is uncontested in this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: In relation to his question, we as a government are certainly interested in developing means by which we can encourage more Canadians to become more active in the ownership of Canadian resource industries. That is one of the reasons we are proposing the steps we are in relation to energy policy. If the hon. member and his party are seriously interested in practical steps that will encourage Canadian ownership of Canadian resources, I hope they will support the measures we put forward in relation to energy development.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, the Gallup poll has determined who the real cuckoo is in this House at the moment.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rodriguez: I will direct my final supplementary question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration, the friend of the mining companies. Maybe he will have some answers. Was the minister informed, in advance, of the lay-offs in all of these iron ore mines? What steps is he taking to overcome the disastrous effects of such shutdowns, because all of them have occurred in one-industry communities? What is he going to do? We want no pussy-footing around.

Hon. Ron Atkey (Minister of Employment and Immigration): The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker. My officials were informed of, I believe, all the cases to which the hon. member has made reference.

Mr. Rodriguez: What are you doing about it?

Mr. Atkey: My officials in the Manpower consultative services have been meeting with mining company officials and union officials to see if there are certain alternatives that can be taken to soften the blow of the lay-offs for the men concerned. One, of course, is unemployment insurance. Another is work-sharing. A variety of options are available within the Manpower consultative service program, and these will be fully explored.