

Oral Questions

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, various avenues have been explored with the provinces. As the hon. member should know—and I am sure he knows—when one is in the process of negotiation, I do not think there is any great advantage in freezing oneself into a single position—neither side—until one is reaching the end of those negotiations. This is a very normal process.

I quite understand my provincial colleagues wanting to keep their options open as late as possible. I have refused to put them in a position where they would have to refuse any possible room for manoeuvring. I have enough respect for them to think that they also want to have some room for manoeuvring. This is the process that we are going on. I think the process is going on normally and I will be able to report, as I said, the results later on.

NEGOTIATIONS TO CONCLUDE ENERGY AGREEMENT WITH PROVINCES

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Given the fact that the two massive oil sands projects—Alsands and Imperial in northeastern Alberta—face a one-year delay for lack of an oil pricing agreement, and that these plants alone would contribute \$3.6 billion to the Canadian balance of payments and provide 97 million man-hours of construction jobs, is the minister prepared to commit to this House that he will, if necessary, negotiate night and day to conclude an energy agreement, stop this idiotic posturing to fulfil Liberal campaign promises and get on with the job of securing the energy supply of Canada?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I would only answer the hon. member by indicating that the federal government is ready to and has approved proceeding with those two plants. As a matter of fact, Petro-Canada, with Alberta Gas Trunk Line, has already come out with a proposal for another plant, a third plant. So the federal government is very supportive of the construction of more tar sands plants. The companies are ready to go ahead with those plants.

I remind the hon. member that it was the government of Alberta which said that it would refuse to let those plants go ahead, until and unless it had the prices it wanted under a new pricing agreement. This is what we are negotiating. We are not the ones preventing those plants from proceeding. I am afraid the hon. member has the wrong information.

Mr. Shields: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources knows full well that the go-ahead on those plants depends solely on an energy pricing agreement. How can the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources expect this House to believe that an energy agreement is a priority with his government when he has failed to meet with the minister of energy for Alberta for one full month?

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, we are not putting any condition on the building of those plants: we are encouraging

their construction. We are supporting the immediate start of those plants. The companies are ready to go ahead. It is the government of Alberta that has been putting conditions. As far as reaching an agreement—

An hon. Member: You are dead wrong.

Mr. Lalonde:—I remind the hon. member that there is an agreement in existence at the present time until July 1.

An hon. Member: Who is responsible for energy self-sufficiency in Canada?

Mr. Lalonde: That agreement is operational now and we are negotiating a new agreement. As soon as those negotiations are completed, I will be very happy to inform the hon. member of the results.

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[*Translation*]

SMALL BUSINESS

ENFORCEMENT OF IMPORT QUOTAS FOR FIVE YEARS

Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Sherbrooke): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Small Businesses. With reference to the 1977 decision of the anti-dumping tribunal to impose quotas on shoes imported into Canada, and with further reference to the action taken by the government then in power to limit shoe imports, and in view of the fact that, in spite of these quotas, more than 12 million pairs of shoes entered Canada illegally over the past three years, could the minister advise the House, first, whether he intends to correct this anomaly which has caused serious hardship to the Canadian footwear industry by demanding the enforcement of the quotas; and, second, whether the minister intends to consider the possibility, as suggested by the shoe manufacturers of Canada, to extend the current quotas for another five years.

Hon. Charles Lapointe (Minister of State, Small Businesses): Madam Speaker, I must advise the hon. member for Sherbrooke that, together with the Minister of State for Finance, I had a most successful working session with the representatives of the Shoe Manufacturers' Association of Canada, and we are having, on a continuing basis, discussions with the industry, the importers, the Retail Merchants' Association of Canada, about the options which I, jointly with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, will eventually submit to my cabinet colleagues. The quotas are scheduled to expire on November 30. We are considering various ways and means to protect the best interests of the shoe manufacturing industry and Canadian consumers.