

Oral Questions

Mr. Crouse: Madam Speaker, since the 75-25 royalty split proposed on offshore resources in 1977 is obviously unacceptable to Nova Scotia, I would like to know what steps the Prime Minister intends to take to resolve this problem before he meets for constitutional talks with the maritime premiers in September.

In the meantime, will he assure the House that my province will continue to receive subsidies on the crude oil which it must buy offshore in order to generate electricity?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I would point out to the hon. member that the governments of those three provinces agreed to sign the agreement, I believe back in 1977, which seems to have settled the matter. Now they are reopening those agreements and they want a new discussion.

The Minister of Justice will be at the meeting on Tuesday to hear their points of view, because that is what the meeting is about. Much before September this matter will be discussed between the provinces and the federal government. However, I repeat: it is up to the provinces to say in what way they want the constitution changed, if at all, because they agreed a few years ago on the arrangements to which I have referred.

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ENERGY

NATURAL GAS PIPELINE TO MARITIMES

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Last December 6, the Minister of Energy stated in the House of Commons that the Atlantic provinces need more natural gas, and a gas pipeline to take gas to the homes and industries there.

Given the representation at that time by the minister in favour of the extension of the natural gas pipeline to the maritime region, the representations of myself, of the Liberal party of the province of New Brunswick, and of the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi, and given the fact the province of New Brunswick has stated that it favours the extension of the pipeline should the obstacles identified by the National Energy Board be removed, what will the minister and the government do to encourage the applicant to overcome these obstacles and to fulfil his own pledge that the pipeline extension to Atlantic Canada is a priority of his government?

Also, can the minister obtain a timetable from the applicant as soon as possible and table it in this House so that the extension of the pipeline will be shown as being a priority.

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I have already had occasion to indicate to this House that the construction of a gas pipeline to the maritime provinces is still the first choice of this government. As the hon. member indicated, some reservations have been expressed by the National Energy Board. I have also had

discussions, on two occasions, about the matter with the promoters of the project.

The hon. member tells me the New Brunswick government has expressed an opinion other than that already on file, that is that it has considerable reservations about the project. I have received no information from that government to that effect and would be very happy to hear what the minister of energy, or any other spokesman for the government of that province, has to say about it.

[English]

Mr. Corbett: Madam Speaker, the minister is fond of including New Brunswick as a partner in co-operation with the present government for restricting the pipeline to Quebec. In this same area of co-operation—which is contrary to representations made by most others, including the minister's colleague but which the minister seems to be so hung-up on—will he assure the province of New Brunswick and its people that he will not tamper or tinker with the contract between the province of New Brunswick and the state of Maine to purchase 400 megawatts of power annually from the oil-fired generating station in Saint John?

[Translation]

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, far from opposing the construction of the pipeline, we have in fact indicated that it is our first option. I would remind the hon. member that the National Energy Board is an independent body, a quasi-judicial organization, and brought down a decision on the matter. If the hon. member gives himself the trouble of reading the ruling of the board, he will realize the board itself points out the reservations expressed by the New Brunswick government on the matter. We did not invent those reservations; they are on file, officially on the record and registered by the National Energy Board.

As for the matter of possible exports of electric power to the United States, there again, should the New Brunswick government reach an agreement with an American state, it will have to go before the board to plead its case; the board will make recommendations and draw conclusions to determine whether or not that energy can be exported to the States, after which a decision will be made.

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● (1440)

[English]

INDUSTRY

RUBBER—ADVERSE EFFECT OF IMPORTING TIRES

Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. When the minister approved the decision of FIRA to permit a Finnish company to import and distribute tires, did he take into account the fact that the government was already