

Oral Questions

heavy water plant. There is evidence that there has been an escalation in costs as there have been with respect to all major capital costs in this country over the past three years.

* * *

HOUSING**DATE OF APPROVAL OF ST. LAWRENCE PROJECT IN TORONTO**

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Urban Affairs. In view of the July 31 deadline for CMHC approval of the St. Lawrence housing project in Toronto, if work is to commence on October 1, which will create 500 badly needed construction jobs, can the minister or his parliamentary secretary inform the House whether approval will be given before that date?

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to advise the hon. member that last week the minister advised Mayor Crombie that he agreed in principle with the St. Lawrence project which, as the hon. member stated, will create many jobs.

Mr. Paproski: This isn't the late show. Just answer the question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* * *

ENERGY**POSSIBILITY OF GASOLINE RATIONING—GOVERNMENT POSITION—ALLEGED LACK OF EFFORT ON CONSERVATION**

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. The minister recently stated that gas rationing is a real possibility in the future and that his department has already prepared rationing legislation. Will the minister inform the House when he will be tabling that rationing legislation and can he give some indication as to when it will be necessary to begin rationing?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, very shortly after the embargo in 1973, work was started to provide a contingency plan for Canada in the event we would not have supplies as a result of the embargo or for other reasons. That work proceeded. When the Emergency Supplies Allocation Board completed its work a year ago, the work was set aside. It has been completed and it can be put into force. It requires an act of this House to do so. I do not intend to table the bill at the present time. Quite clearly, I think it is prudent that we have legislation ready to go and more particularly the system ready to go for the allocation of scarce resources in the event it is needed. However, I hope it never will be.

[Mr. Gillespie.]

Mr. McKenzie: As the International Energy Agency cited Canada for below average conservation efforts last year and as the minister has frittered away four years of opportunities during which this country could have made a good start toward self sufficiency, not self reliance, in the late eighties, is the government prepared to admit its responsibility where rationing is imminent?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, as I have already indicated to the hon. member, it is prudent to have a rationing system worked out which has been thoroughly discussed with the members of the industry so that if a rationing system becomes necessary, it can be implemented very quickly. It would be very helpful for the people of Canada and perhaps members on this side of the House if members opposite would take a more positive interest in some of these questions and put forward a few ideas. I cannot recall a time when the Conservative party has been as bankrupt of ideas in the energy field as it is right now.

Mr. McKenzie: I suggest that the minister read the committee meeting minutes as well as speeches made in this House by members of the opposition. We are not the government. They are the government. The IEA has stated that Canada ranks fifteenth out of the 18 member nations. How can the minister say he has an all-out effort with regard to exploration? When will he be giving us his new rules and regulations needed for frontier development?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is misleading the House, I assume inadvertently, when he says that Canadian efforts with regard to conservation and the development of an energy policy lag so far behind. If he were to read the transcript, he would find that in almost every area Canada has moved ahead very substantially. The one area where Canada was criticized, and this is the area where the hon. member's party has had so much trouble making up its mind, was that we had continued to keep our price significantly below the world price. I have not heard the hon. member or his colleagues arguing that Canada should raise the price of its oil. Indeed, they have been absolutely silent with regard to this fundamental question on energy policy in this country.

* * *

● (1440)

PENSIONS**PROPOSED INCREASE IN VETERANS AND OLD AGE PENSIONS**

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question relates to at least two departments of government and I had intended, therefore, to put it to the Prime Minister. In his absence I will address it to the Acting Prime Minister, which will probably be appropriate since the Acting Prime Minister today is the Minister of Finance. Now that the President of the Treasury Board has been able to announce the lifting of the freeze on the salaries of senior civil servants, although he has promised us that in 1977-78 no public ser-