

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Lalonde:** —to try to support his argument. In terms of the James Bay area, which is under provincial control and jurisdiction, the hon. member should know that the government of Quebec did carry out environmental studies. They were carried out by the government of Quebec.

Second, as far as this particular project is concerned, I am amazed, again, that the hon. member would suggest that we would show no respect for the fact that the environmental concerns have not been taken into account appropriately, according to the National Energy Board and, second, that we should ignore and reject the point of view expressed quite clearly, again as recently as last week, by one of the maritime provinces, the government of New Brunswick, which has said that we should be carefully studying all the alternatives.

● (1125)

I am amazed that the hon. member would resort to that kind of argument on an issue which is so important. This pipeline is something for which we have argued and we will keep giving a high priority to it, but we will not do it by running roughshod over the concerns of provincial governments and by ignoring basic issues concerning the environment. I think that is a wise decision.

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

## DATE NATURAL GAS WILL BE FLOWING INTO MARITIMES

**Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources who has neatly skirted some of the pertinent decisions that should have been made, and promises that were made.

The minister is reported to have stated that he is optimistic that gas will be flowing into the maritime region by 1982-83, but he has also indicated that he does not expect the pipeline to Quebec will be completed by 1985. Can the minister explain this apparent discrepancy and, under those circumstances, how does he plan to get the gas to the maritime region by 1982-83 if the pipeline to Quebec City will not be completed until 1985?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Indeed, Madam Speaker, it would be very hard to reconcile if I had ever said this, but I do not know where the hon. member got this particular information. I was in the House last night and, unless I was misquoted, I argued that, on the contrary, the realization of the pipeline to Quebec City should take place in 1981.

I said that the realization of that pipeline would help the eventual construction of a pipeline to the maritimes, by which time I would hope we would have had the information concerning environmental issues and on the reserves of natural gas off Sable Island. At that time, the Energy Board would be in a position to make recommendations to the cabinet on the basis of the full knowledge of the facts, including environmental factors.

Also, the fact that the pipeline would be constructed as far as Quebec City would allow for an early completion of this line. I do not think I have ever spoken about 1985 being the deadline for the Quebec pipeline. If there is such a report, it is certainly inaccurate.

**Mr. Corbett:** Can I take it, then, that the minister is committing himself to the statement that he has made, that gas will be flowing to the maritime region by 1982-83, which would naturally be an extension of the pipeline from Quebec City which, as the minister has just stated, should be completed by 1981?

I would like confirmation of that, however, from the minister; and in case the minister is not aware of the commitments that were made by his government, by his leader, and apparently by every other member of the Liberal caucus during the campaign, I have right here a copy of the ad which appeared in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*.

At that time, the commitment was made not only to extend the pipeline to the maritime region but to make it reversible. I would ask the minister to secure that commitment, and to assure the Atlantic region that he will indeed see that that pipeline is reversible so that Atlantic Canada will have an opportunity to be an exporter of energy, should they be in that fortunate position.

**Mr. Lalonde:** Again, the hon. member is trying to distort the answer I gave him a minute ago. He wants me to say there will be a reversible pipeline by 1982-83, whether or not gas is found off Sable Island. If the exploration proves negative and there are no reserves of commercial value over there, surely he would not argue that we must build that reversible pipeline by 1982-83.

It might be that we will have to build a pipeline with reversible capacity, or provide for the eventual capacity for reversible flow, but that is a very different thing from building a reversible pipeline. Indeed, what we indicated during the campaign and in the Halifax speech in which I quoted the Prime Minister is that we would begin negotiations to take immediate action for the construction.

● (1130)

Indeed, we began those negotiations as soon as we took office. We have the report from the National Energy Board. We will have to ensure that all factors are taken into account again and that the whole project will be to the benefit of the workers and consumers in the maritime provinces. That is our objective, that is our priority and that is what we will keep working at.

**Mr. Andre:** With whom are you negotiating?

**Mr. Lalonde:** I want to assure the hon. member that we will keep doing this. As to providing a specific date at the present time, again I think it would be irresponsible, before we have the reports and know how things have been going in terms of submissions by the concerned corporations.