

• (1430)

There are some things that we do agree with, Madam Speaker. We do agree that Central America is an area of strategic importance to the United States. The ways in which it tries to ensure that Central America remains within, shall we say, the influence and the camp of democratic societies rather than going over to communist societies can be a subject of difference. On that subject, the Secretary of State for External Affairs has indicated several times that the problems there are social and economic before they are military. That is the position of this Government.

Miss Jewett: Madam Speaker, within that long answer the Prime Minister is still broadcasting to the Canadian public two different signals. On the one hand, the Secretary of State at the United Nations—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Today's Question Period is off to a bad start. Questions are far too long. I can see that the Hon. Member is about to repeat what the Prime Minister has said. I would like her to go directly to her question.

Miss Jewett: Madam Speaker, I believe that that is most unfair, because I asked a very short question.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

CANADIAN POSITION

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I will ask the Prime Minister if there is not an inconsistency between, on the one hand, saying at the United Nations that Canada is opposed to all military intervention and, on the other hand, saying that some military intervention is all right if it is in the strategic interests of the United States.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I will try to keep my answer very short. I think that the two propositions are not exclusive. If all military intervention ceases, as we hope, then obviously it would be bad for the United States to intervene militarily because the hypothesis is that all should cease, including both sides. But if all military intervention does not cease, then we do not think that the United States must necessarily cease when the other side continues sending arms.

Miss Jewett: Madam Speaker, perhaps the Prime Minister will say that at the United Nations next time.

CONTADORA GROUP CONFERENCES

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, my final supplementary question is to ask whether or not Canada would, if asked, agree to be an observer at the Contadora group conferences.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I think that I would have to take that question as notice. It is a suggestion that I have discussed myself with the

80130-9

Oral Questions

Secretary of State for External Affairs. I raised the subject at Williamsburg with the other Summiters. I had the assurance from our main partners that they are sympathetic to the actions of the Contadoras, but as to whether we will or should be an observer or not, I would have to say that I have not had an answer yet from the Department or from the Minister.

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NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION THAT PROGRAM BE SCRAPPED

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance and deals with the National Energy Program which was introduced in the Minister's budget of October 28, 1980. Yesterday the C.D. Howe Research Institute released a study confirming the widely held if not universally held view that the National Energy Program has had disastrous consequences for the Canadian economy by costing Canadians billions of dollars and thousands of jobs. The study concludes that the NEP must be scrapped, and calls for a parliamentary task force to reassess Canada's energy objectives. Will the Minister accept the recommendations of this non-partisan research institute, admit the failure of the National Energy Program, and appoint a task force with a mandate to do the job quickly and report back to the House quickly so that new and more appropriate energy policies can be implemented?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, first the Hon. Member refers to a report prepared by two researchers. Second, I would invite the Hon. Member to read the report. The report does not say what the Hon. Member has indicated that it says. Third, I would indicate to the Hon. Member that many changes have been made to the National Energy Program since its announcement in 1980 to take into account the evolution of the oil and gas sector. Some changes were announced in my last budget and others were announced as part of the agreement made with Alberta in September, 1981. Other changes have been made at various times through various budgets. There has been a flexible examination of the situation at all times, and adjustments have been made.

I would argue to the contrary and say that the situation in Canada compared to that in the United States, for instance, is very good at the present time. I could mention a number of foreign companies that have decided to move some of their investments back to Canada or expand investments in Canada rather than in the United States at this time.

Mr. Andre: Madam Speaker, the Minister's answer indicates the vital necessity for such a task force because he is completely out of touch with reality. The report says that the National Energy Program failed to promote Canadianization. It did the opposite. The report says that the National Energy