

Oral Questions

Canada does not call for intervention by the Government at this time. On behalf of which side would the Hon. Member ask the Government to intervene?

• (1500)

[*English*]

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[*Translation*]

ENERGY

SOLIGAZ PROJECT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Robert Toupin (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Hon. Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

The Quebec Minister of Energy stated recently that if the Sarnia—Montreal pipeline is not converted to natural gas liquids, the Soligaz \$250 million project will be in jeopardy, and he asked the Minister to intervene at the National Energy Board.

My question is this: Did the Minister make the importance of that conversion to Montreal-East and workers in Montreal-East known to the National Energy Board? Did he intervene, and if not, why?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, in the appropriate terms, yes.

INQUIRY HOW GOVERNMENT HAS INTERVENED

Mr. Robert Toupin (Terrebonne): I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

“In the appropriate terms, yes”. I would like to ask the Minister to tell us, since he stated last week he would not intervene with the National Energy Board, when he did intervene, how and in which direction? Can he give a specific answer to that question?

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I used the phrase “in the appropriate terms”, because clearly the Minister of Energy may not intervene in the Board’s decision process. But he can make the Board aware of the importance of such decisions, to ensure in particular that the system works in a fair way. And it is in that sense, within my responsibilities and my powers, that I did so Mr. Speaker.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN—TRANSBOUNDARY EMISSIONS

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. As a result of the decision yesterday by the United States Supreme Court on the subject of acid rain, both the Ontario Government and the Canadian Coalition on Acid Rain have indicated they will be henceforth concentrating their efforts to control cross-border acid rain emissions on lobbying of the United States Congress.

Will the Minister advise the House if the Canadian Government is presently lobbying the United States Congress on the subject of acid rain emissions? And, specifically, what efforts are we making to persuade United States Congressmen and Senators to pass very tough and strict acid rain emission control standards?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is referring to a U.S. Supreme Court decision in which the court, in effect, defeated the efforts of eight of the States in the northeastern tier to get a court-imposed solution to the acid rain problem. In a nutshell, the case was decided on a technicality surrounding a letter which had been written by a previous head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

In any event, from a Canadian point of view, we lost on procedural grounds, which indicates to us, as a Government, that we Canadians cannot count on the American courts to press our case in the United States. If we are to have a solution to the acid rain problem on a transboundary basis, we are going to have to find it on a Government-to-Government basis. That is why we are concentrating our efforts, in the first instance, on the U.S. administration.

I note with pleasure that on May 26 the U.S. President—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. McMillan: —reconfirmed the position he expressed on the floor of the House of Commons in favour of giving consideration to a bilateral accord. In tandem with that—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. McMillan: —we are using all legal and diplomatic instruments to press Congress—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. McMillan: —for a legislative approach to the acid rain issue.