

Oral Questions

WITHDRAWAL FROM ALBERTA OIL SANDS PROJECT

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources why Petro-Canada is removing itself from the oil sands project in Fort McMurray and northeastern Alberta? Why is it in the doldrums in the Beaufort Sea? Why is it not moving into the offshore of Newfoundland and developing our own oil, for God's sake? I cannot understand the Minister.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, as usual the Hon. Member thinks that when he speaks very loudly we will listen more attentively. I have to tell him that Petro-Canada is involved in projects in Canada; it is involved in projects in the North; it is involved off the coast of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and it is involved in some other projects in Alberta. I hope to be in a position to make some announcements about it.

I am glad the Hon. Member knows there is a role for Petro-Canada in Canada. It is playing a big role. Often some of his friends tell me that there should be no Petro-Canada, but today I am happy to see that the Hon. Member wants even more involvement by Petro-Canada in Canada.

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PUBLIC WORKS

COST OF FEDERAL OFFICE BUILDING IN HALIFAX

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Public Works that is almost as farcical as that last answer. Early last week the Minister of State for International Trade announced the construction of a \$52 million federal Government office building in Halifax. The regional director of Public Works has said that the \$52 million will in fact be \$5 million. Can the Minister tell us which of those figures is correct?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member qualified his question as being farcical. That is for him to decide.

I know that the program to put a major building in Halifax is well beyond \$5 million. It is a very important construction. It will enhance Halifax and strengthen it as a place where a lot of decentralization of this Government has taken place. I hope the Hon. Member is not complaining that his area, metropolitan Halifax, will benefit from a major asset which is a good, new federal building.

Mr. Forrestall: Madam Speaker, I am objecting to the construction of a \$52 million office building on the waterfront of Halifax.

NEED FOR HOSPITAL PROJECT

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could be more explicit. He says the building will cost much more than \$5 billion. His colleague has said it will cost \$52 million. This is proposed at a time when we need fast tracking, as he has described it, to get

such massive construction programs off the ground quickly in order to put people to work. Would the Minister not feel that it would be more speedy and more appropriate, for example, to consider putting that money into the Camphill hospital project and get that off the ground, so that it could go ahead immediately and provide much needed medical services for Nova Scotians, and very particularly for Canadian veterans?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I do not think it is for me to determine the priorities between two Departments in terms of their needs.

I suspect that the confusion between the figures in the Hon. Member's question, of \$5 million and \$52 million, may come from the fact that this is intended to be a lease-purchase which is to trigger the use of private sector money. The federal Government would rent from the private sector. That is the approach, and may account for the difference between the \$5 million and \$52 million. This is a major project, and the figure of \$52 million does not appear to me to be very far from the facts.

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CANADIAN DAIRY COMMISSION

ALLOCATION OF MILK QUOTAS IN ALBERTA

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. In late January I drew the Minister's attention to the serious problems affecting the dairy producers of Alberta who had lost their market quota and were facing very serious consequences. At the present time in Alberta some 400 to 500 producers out of a total of 1,800 are without quota. In January the Minister said that if we could demonstrate that there were cases of severe hardship he would take some action. Since the position has deteriorated further, is the Minister now prepared to take action to alleviate this problem?

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member knows full well that I deal with the Canadian Dairy Commission. I report to the House on what the Canadian Dairy Commission does. He knows that the operation of the Canadian Dairy Commission is conducted by the dairy farmers of Canada themselves. They decide how the natural quota will be divided and how cutbacks will take place in an equitable fashion all across the country.

Dairy farmers in Alberta are not being treated differently from dairy farmers in any other part of Canada. Quotas are being administered by farmers themselves, not by me. If there are 500 dairy farmers in Alberta without quota I have not been informed of that. It is news to me that there are 500 without quota. I find it very hard to believe that there would be 500 dairy farmers who have been producing milk either on a straight industrial quota or on quotas through their provincial milk marketing board, who would be without quota. I