

*Oral Questions***ENERGY****PLANS RESPECTING CHANGEOVER FROM OIL-HEATING TO GAS-HEATING EQUIPMENT**

**Hon. George Hees (Northumberland):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. As one of the most effective ways to make this country self-sufficient in oil is to switch over from oil-heating to gas-heating, is it the intention of the government to start this very important process moving along by subsidizing the changeover from oil-heating equipment to gas-heating equipment; and, if so, when may we expect an outline of the government's plans in this regard?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** First, I would be very pleased to send the hon. member a copy of my very important speech to the Canadian Pipeline Contractors Association in which I announced a number of firm decisions by this government, whose effect would be to encourage the substitution of gas for oil in a large number of homes and commercial enterprises in eastern Canada, particularly in Quebec. I also indicated that there would be upgrading of heavy fuel oil to provide gasoline and diesel oil in greater quantities to the Canadian public.

As for the specific question raised by the hon. member, that is obviously a matter which, if it were part of it, would be covered by a general announcement of new policies and strategies with regard to energy.

**Mr. Hees:** The minister in his reply outlined everything except what I asked for. He mentioned a few things which he had suggested here, there and all over the place, none of which are 10 per cent as effective as subsidizing the cost of the changeover from oil-heating to gas-heating equipment. That is the key to the whole problem.

I ask the minister once again: is he considering subsidizing a changeover from oil-heating to gas-heating? If he is, would he say so? If he is not, would he admit it plainly and straightforwardly?

**Mr. Lalonde:** I am sure the hon. member knows that since 1974 this government has been subsidizing gas consumption by the introduction of a regime whereby the cost of gas is set at 85 per cent of the Btu value of oil. In that sense, for the last six years—thanks to the policies of the Liberal government—the consumer has benefited from a substantial subsidy when consuming gas rather than oil. Whether we should add further to this subsidy is a matter I am presently reviewing and an announcement will be made in due time.

**Mr. Hees:** In other words, the government has no intention of subsidizing the changeover.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY****PROTECTION FROM PRODUCTION OF ELEMENTS IN VIOLATION OF HUMAN INTEGRITY**

**Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Bruce-Grey):** Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Justice my question is directed to the Minister of State for Science and Technology. Yesterday, the United States Supreme Court issued a verdict which gives inventors control over life creation resulting from gene-splitting or genetic engineering. As a result of this decision, the inventor of living organisms is guaranteed the right to make and sell his creations.

Apart from the immediate practical advantages of this decision, such as General Electric's solution to oil spills by developing a new bacterial strain, there are serious implications to all of us ranging from uncontrollable organisms and bacterial warfare to the manipulation of test-tube life. Does the government recognize the dangers of this U.S. Supreme Court decision, and does the minister intend to allow multinationals like General Electric to control, through patents, technology which might prove to be the ultimate violation of human integrity?

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

**Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment):** I thank the hon. member for drawing this decision to my attention. Clearly, this is a complicated matter and I should like to examine it before reporting back to him. What I can say, though, is that—last week I announced the formation in Canada of a committee—a task force to examine the problems raised by advances in biotechnology and report back to me. They, too, are active in trying to assess not only the technological possibilities of their potential impact on society, but also the moral impact and the general social implications which these developments might have for us.

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**AGRICULTURE****CLASSIFICATION OF LOW-INCIDENCE BRUCELLOSIS REGIONS**

**Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture and it deals with the classification of low-incidence brucellosis regions by the Health of Animals Branch of his department. A part of my riding in Victoria county qualifies under this classification and has been waiting for some time to have restrictions lifted with regard to the movement and sale of cattle. Would the minister say whether or not this area is to be designated a low-incidence area? If so, when we can expect an announcement?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, all I can say is that I will investigate the matter the hon. member has raised, and if it is true—as I have no doubt it is—there must be some delay occurring or some slip-up somewhere and it will be rectified immediately.