

tax with the four western producing provinces beyond the freeze period?

● (1210)

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague has already replied to that question by saying that this is a matter to be discussed with the provinces in January.

NUCLEAR REACTORS AND HEAVY WATER PLANTS—DATE OF EXPANSION IN WESTERN CANADA—POSSIBLE INCREASE IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In light of the Prime Minister's statement in the House yesterday, and in view of the difficulties we are presently facing in respect of more conventional hydraulic generating stations and the need for nuclear research and development, could the minister make a statement as to the time frame he is looking at in regard to the possible expansion of heavy water plant sites and nuclear reactors in western Canada?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my statement, it seems that the earliest nuclear reactor in western Canada will be at such time as the Manitoba utility decides that it should bring a nuclear reactor on stream for its purposes. There has been some discussion in British Columbia, as the hon. gentleman may know, with regard to the possibility of a nuclear reactor to meet the power needs of Vancouver Island, but I think it is fair to say that that discussion to the moment has been inconclusive.

With regard to additional heavy water plants, this depends to a degree on the rate of sale of the CANDU system in other nations. Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. has been active in its export program, and it will be a combination of additional nuclear plants for export and for Canada which will determine the time frame within which the next one will be brought on. Judging by this year's rate, that should be at a fairly early date.

Mr. Epp: I should like to commend the minister for the statement he made and also with respect to sales. The lack of confidence that has been evident in places such as the Whiteshell nuclear research station, I believe, will be rectified to a great extent. In light of the expanded acceptance of the CANDU reactor, I should like to ask the minister whether he has in mind a widespread expansion of research and development funds for nuclear research in our present installations.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the hon. gentleman for his kind remarks. I think it is fair to say that because of its active export program AECL has been concentrating its attention on marketing the existing reactor. It does have two modifications which are currently under study. As to a specific program to increase research, I do not think that at the moment they have any proposal in regard to Whiteshell, though obviously that is a site that they would want to concentrate their efforts upon when additional research does come along.

Oral Questions

PETROLEUM—REFERENCE TO MINISTER'S STATEMENTS CONCERNING ALBERTA MARKETING BOARD AND LIFTING OF PRICE FREEZE

Mr. Peter C. Bawden (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources having to do with the minister's insistence in the past that he will always stick to the written record. The minister on November 14 in the miscellaneous estimates committee was asked about his position if the Alberta government, by way of royalty or a marketing board, raised its prices to world prices for petroleum products and he said "Yes, indeed, that would certainly reduce, if not eliminate, the export tax". When asked if that would be acceptable to him the minister said it would certainly be acceptable. Would the minister say now whether he will still stick by that statement?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, in light of the proposal to hold a meeting of first ministers, among our requests to Alberta would be one that it not change the current policy but discuss it at this conference.

Mr. Speaker: We have just about reached the end of the question period. The hon. member for Calgary South might ask a supplementary and then I will see the hon. member for Selkirk.

Mr. Bawden: The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on November 14, in response to a question whether the government was irrevocably committed to lifting the freeze on crude prices, said yes, that was the policy as announced. In view of the uncertainty that has been created in the provinces and for the Canadian people and the fact that Canadians cannot trust his answers, will he say whether this will change in the future?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INQUIRY INTO LEAKED DOCUMENT—REQUEST FOR PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and refers to the statement he made last week about disclosure to a member of this House of confidential information contained in a document. On the assumption that the long established procedures referred to by the minister in his statement to the House last Thursday include suspension, followed by an inquiry, possibly dismissal and the right of appeal, can the minister tell the House how far these procedures have now gone? Specifically, can he tell us whether the person charged with the leaks has at least been suspended from the public service, as is required—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the hon. member might allow the minister to reply to the first part of the question. It seems to me that a question as long as this one takes a little too much time away from other hon. members with questions to ask. I assume that the hon. member