

allowed for a \$7 billion investment in the next three oil sands projects, both in the debt and equity as well as the total commencement of the infrastructure. Since the province of Alberta is such a critical partner in bringing forward these projects, is it possible for the minister to broaden the sweep of these negotiations to include not just those projects themselves, but in the total concept of the energy policy to bring the province back as a willing partner in the very important developments we must have in the country?

• (1125)

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, certainly I would have no objection to that. As a matter of fact, we have talked about those two projects because they are the ones currently on the table on which tens of millions of dollars have already been spent. But as the hon. member knows, Nova and Petro-Canada have a joint proposal for a fourth plant. Certainly we would be very interested in discussing further proposals, if there are any, with the government of Alberta, or industry, or both.

As for possible investment by the government of Alberta, obviously this is a matter for the government of Alberta to decide. At the present time, on those projects the problem does not appear to be essentially a shortage of money for investment; it is the assurance that there will be a good enough rate of return on whatever they will invest, and that is what is still being discussed.

INQUIRY WHETHER PRIME MINISTER WILL MEET PREMIER LOUGHEED

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Many Canadians find it unacceptable that we have a confrontation and deterioration in federal-provincial relations. I think last night was just a further stage in this process. I detect in the House today a feeling that what is needed is a calm and reasoned approach by both the federal government and Alberta because the people of Canada are caught in the middle of this dispute.

The Prime Minister appeared to indicate that he would keep the door open to negotiations, and then there was some talk from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources about officials meeting. Would he clarify for the House and for the country what specific plans he has in mind for further negotiations? More specifically, is he prepared to meet with Premier Lougheed personally, and when?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, it seems to me that that question is something of a repetition of the question asked by the opposition House leader.

Mr. Waddell: No, not quite.

Mr. Trudeau: He has my answers. They might be more enlightened if I knew the position of the hon. member on this. He seems puzzled by the whole situation, as indeed he should be. The take of the producing provinces is reduced from something like 45 per cent to 43 per cent, which is not major.

Oral Questions

The take of the federal government is considerably increased, but it is at the expense of the producing private sector. It would be interesting to know if the NDP will support our approach on this, if it thinks we are hitting the private sector and the oil companies too hard, if it thinks as a consequence that the federal government should be getting less money from them, or if it thinks we should be hitting them harder. I await some help from the hon. member who has a distinguished record of thought on this matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, I might say to the Prime Minister that we on this side of the House feel the provinces have legitimate concerns for their vast problems and costs. If one has been to Fort McMurray, as has the Prime Minister, one will know the cost of schools, housing, social services and so on. At the same time we recognize, as do most Canadians, that we must have a national energy policy.

The Prime Minister answered my question with a question, which I know is a favourite technique. But the point which I think the country wants to know is: will he personally continue negotiations with Premier Lougheed? Will he personally meet with Premier Lougheed and, if so, when?

• (1130)

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I met with Premier Lougheed for a few days last summer and I was prepared to meet with him last Monday. I am prepared to meet with him again.

Miss MacDonald: When?

Mr. Trudeau: Any time which would be useful from his point of view and mine. He can come tomorrow if he wishes. The point is that the hon. member seems to be making suggestions which do not have any substance to them. The real question is: is the sharing fair or not? If the provincial share is going down from 45 to 43 per cent, it is not a big stroke against the provinces, or against the schools in Fort McMurray, which seem to concern the hon. member. But there is a rather big take from the oil companies which is to the benefit of the consumers of Canada.

Mr. Blenkarn: Oh, come on!

Mr. Trudeau: And to the federal government. I am prepared to meet Premier Lougheed. It would be of help to me if the hon. member himself—I know his party is divided on this—could tell me if he thinks we are taking too much from the oil companies or too much from the province when we are going down to 43 per cent. I am not asking a question; I am just suggesting that he might try to get his thoughts together and be helpful to the Canadian nation on this.

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister mentioned Canadian consumers, who appear to me to be the forgotten people in this dispute, if I can put my thoughts together.