

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend surely knows that there are two questions to be answered with regard to the point he raises; one, whether the Arctic pilot project will go ahead and, secondly, if it goes ahead what would be the best site for a liquid natural gas plant. These two questions are before the National Energy Board. The National Energy Board has heard witnesses and will eventually make public its conclusions. At that time the government will consider its report. It would be not only premature but totally improper, either for me or for the government, to act or take a position until the Energy Board has reported on this very important issue.

I would also bring to the hon. member's attention the fact that we are confident natural gas will also become available from off Sable Island. It may well be that there is a possibility of a petrochemical industry in the maritimes on the basis of the natural gas that will come from the Canada lands off Nova Scotia.

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CANADA PENSION PLAN

MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Minister of Finance I direct my question to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. The Minister of National Health and Welfare indicated that the Canada Pension Plan was under review. Would the Prime Minister indicate to the House what reform is contemplated to ensure proper management and funding of the Canada Pension Plan? Will he indicate to the House also what steps are being taken by his government to ensure that private pension funds are being properly managed?

Mr. Doug Frith (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, in response with regard to the Canada Pension Plan, the deputy minister of Finance was before the parliamentary committee last week and pointed out that there will be some changes to the Canada Pension Plan, and he expects that those changes should take place after the year 1985. My understanding is that at the present time there is a committee working with the Minister of Finance and his provincial counterparts, reviewing this whole area of CPP.

SPECIFICS OF PROPOSED CHANGES

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Madam Speaker, will the parliamentary secretary be a little more precise and indicate to the House what specific changes are being contemplated? Is the government looking for more participation by way of funding from individual contributors, or what specifics are we looking at?

Oral Questions

Mr. Doug Frith (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Madam Speaker, those changes have not been finalized. I think I replied earlier last fall, with regard to the Canada Pension Plan, that since its inception it was realized there would have to be changes in the contribution rates somewhere in the decade of the 1980s. As a result, this committee was set up in 1977 and it has been reviewing this whole process since that time. I would assume that once negotiations have been completed there will be some answer in the House by the Minister of Finance.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

COMPLETION OF HOUSE CONSTRUCTION

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Madam Speaker, the money available to Indian bands for the construction of new housing has always been short of what has been needed so that many Indian houses have never been completed. Now the department is requiring Indian bands to guarantee that they will be able to finish houses before any funding is released. Did the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development make a commitment to Treasury Board that Indian bands would be able to complete construction of new housing with the present funding, when this only amounts to about half the money required? If he did not make this commitment, from where did this ridiculous policy come?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, the hon. member is aware of the situation, that for some time there was a subsidy of approximately \$12,500 for each Indian home. That was the situation prior to about a year ago. This government, in terms of trying to be of assistance, upped that subsidy by approximately another \$10,000 to an average of \$22,500, give or take \$100. That is the situation as it applies now to Indian housing across the country. Might I say that this was welcomed generally in the Indian communities across the country, that is, the additional subsidy, and it also meant a fairly substantial additional financial commitment by this government to Indian communities in Canada.

RELEASE OF FUNDS TO INDIAN BANDS

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan-Malahat-The Islands): Madam Speaker, the minister knows that the estimated cost for even basic housing on Indian reserves is approximately \$37,500, and there is no program in place yet for the labour component. The construction season is moving on, and unless funding is released we are going to lose that season and the necessary Indian houses are not going to be built. Will the minister make a commitment to release funding to Indian bands for houses in accordance with the general principles of accountability which he accepted for other funding last summer?