

[English]

PROPOSED GAS EXPORTS—EFFECT ON COST OF ENERGY FOR  
CANADIAN BUSINESSES

**Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton-Lawrence):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for International Trade. In view of the fact that there is always a necessity for Canadian business to be able to rely upon dependable and reasonably-priced energy for its creation or its continuation, was the minister consulted before this decision was taken and, if he was, what is his view as to how the proposed export gas will have an effect in terms of giving some hope, promise or solidity to Canadian businesses to dare to venture forward either to expand their present business or to create new business; or is there an idea that there is going to be, on the basis of past NEB figures, a great reliance upon just that figure for the future?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of State for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I think part of the question the hon. member has just asked was answered in my response a short while ago. One thing we have to consider is, as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said, that this is going to generate a considerable amount of employment and activity in the west in future exploration and development.

The other factor which touches on the hon. member's question is the whole matter of energy supply and energy growth demand in this country which was taken into account by the Energy Board proposal. There should be ample reason for the industry to have confidence, in that in this country we are going to have a confidence of energy supply for many years down the road under the policy being put forward by this government. That is a very important factor in our over-all industrial development.

[Translation]

INQUIRY AS TO HOW PRIME MINISTER CAN RECONCILE HIS  
TWO STATEMENTS

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister. As the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie has just said in his question, now that the Prime Minister has stated, on one hand, that he has known for a long time that there was a possibility of oil shortages in Quebec and in Canada this winter and, on the other hand, on November 6, in a letter addressed to the leader of the Social Credit Party of Canada he stated that there would be no oil shortages in Quebec and in the maritime provinces, I should like to ask whether he can tell the House how he can reconcile his two statements.

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, as I have just said in English to the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie, I qualified my remarks this morning by indicating that there was some knowledge of certain possibilities, like an unforeseen increase in consumer demand, a hard winter, and things like that. We received every month from the National

*Oral Questions*

Energy Board their most up to date data on the state of Canadian supplies and the possibility of a shortage. To date there has been no indication by the National Energy Board of any possibility of a shortage in Canada. Now, because of some changes in the rate of oil consumption throughout Canada, there has been a change in the analysis of the National Energy Board. I think the most responsible approach for us is to point out the necessity for all Canadians to conserve oil to ensure that there will be no shortage.

● (1140)

[English]

**Mr. Nystrom:** Mr. Speaker, can the Prime Minister tell the House whether or not he thought he was being straightforward with the House, when he knew all along that there was the possibility of a shortage, in light of the letter which he wrote to the Leader of the Social Credit Party of Canada and which he repeated in this House on November 6? Was he being straightforward?

**Mr. Clark:** Mr. Speaker, I was being straightforward.

[Translation]

In my reply to the leader of the Social Credit Party of Canada, I said that, on the basis of the information I had at the time I wrote the letter, there was no risk of oil shortages. But afterwards there was a change in the National Energy Board's analysis, which is quite normal.

**M. LeBlanc:** The change came after the vote.

**Mr. Clark:** We now face a greater risk of shortages—

**Mr. LeBlanc:** Where are the Socreds this morning?

**Mr. Clark:**—but, as I have said—

**M. Ouellet:** You were told lies.

**Mr. Clark:**—members of Parliament and Canadians in general must accept the facts and understand that the best way to help Quebecers, to help people in the Atlantic provinces, is to emphasize conservation.

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**HEALTH AND WELFARE**

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE \$20 MILLION  
SUBSIDY FOR GERONTOLOGY RESEARCH

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Saint-Léonard-Anjou):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Statistics Canada published yesterday the famous study called "Hospitals: Horizon 2031" which clearly shows that within the next five decades Canada's old-age population will increase to the point where it will in fact quintuple and the