

*Oral Questions*

● (1500)

PROPOSED TAPS TANKER ROUTE—ALLEGED  
MISREPRESENTATION OF CANADIAN POSITION TO  
UNITED STATES SENATE—GOVERNMENT ACTION

**Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West):** In view of the clear indication that the Canadian position on the transportation of Alaskan oil has been misinterpreted by certain segments of the United States Senate, and in view of the fact that this will be the last opportunity for Canada to make its position known to the United States, would the Prime Minister consider either making representations himself or causing strong representations to be made to the United States outlining clearly the Canadian position on this matter?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** So that there may be no misunderstanding as to the representations which were made, perhaps I ought to supplement what the Prime Minister has said. According to my information the State Department sought a report on the views of the Canadian government through its embassy in Ottawa. The United States embassy in turn submitted a questionnaire to officials of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. We gather, however, that before the Canadian reply was received the embassy sent forward its own assessment of the Canadian attitude. This was reflected in the initial response provided to the United States Congress by the State Department.

Subsequently, the U.S. embassy here received from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources answers to the questions they had submitted. These were subsequently passed on by the State Department to the Congress. I would note that an additional paragraph elaborating the Canadian reply was made available to the United States authorities—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would hope that the minister's statement is coming to a close. He will recognize, I am sure, that a reply which is so much longer than usual ought normally to be given to the House by way of a statement on motions. Perhaps the hon. minister might wait for a supplementary to be asked; this might give him an opportunity to make additional information available to the House.

**Mr. Harding:** A further supplementary on this important matter, either to the Secretary of State for External Affairs or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Would the government spell out the essential points in its position with regard to the modes of transportation of oil from Alaska and other Arctic fields to southern markets in order that the Americans may at least get this information from the House of Commons.

**Mr. Sharp:** I was about to end the answer I was giving, Mr. Speaker. We have no reason whatever to doubt that the Congress of the United States was fully informed as to the Canadian position on the basis of the answers we had given.

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** A supplementary to the Prime Minister regarding the answer he gave in reply to the request by my hon. friend from Vancouver South to send a delegation from the Canadian

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Parliament to the Congress of the United States. If a committee of the United States Congress wished to come to Canada to see the government and advise it about the position of the United States Congress on a matter of great importance to the United States, would the Canadian government not welcome such a committee and, therefore, could we not send a similar committee—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am sure the hon. member will appreciate that a question asked in those terms is hypothetical. The hon. member for Kootenay West has a supplementary.

**Mr. Hees:** On a point of order—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We should try to proceed in an orderly fashion. The hon. member's question was not in order. I recognize the hon. member for Kootenay West, but I will return to the hon. member in a moment.

PROPOSED TAPS TANKER ROUTE—REQUEST FOR  
ASSURANCE OF FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY IN EVENT OF  
OIL SPILL

**Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West):** I have a further supplementary for the appropriate minister. In the event of the construction of the TAPS route, would the hon. gentleman be willing to give an unequivocal guarantee to the people of British Columbia that any environmental and economic damage resulting from oil spills consequent upon the transportation of Alaskan oil along the Pacific Coast will be fully borne by the federal government or by agencies or funds set up for that purpose?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** I am not sure whether we could give such a guarantee. Obviously, one of the priorities at this point, assuming that the House of Representatives follows the lead of the Senate, is to secure the maximum possible protection for the island and lower mainland of British Columbia, in particular, and consider the possibility of the utilization of the Trans-Mountain pipeline through Canada to supply the Cherry Point refinery.

**Mr. Hees:** In view of the fact that the Canadian government would obviously welcome a committee from the United States Congress which sought to clarify an important issue with the government, would the Prime Minister now explain why it is not acceptable to the government to send a committee, as suggested, to the Congress in the United States?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I suggest to the hon. member that this is debate. I think that he will appreciate that a question asked of the minister in those terms is more of an argument than a question.

PROPOSED TAPS TANKER ROUTE—SUGGESTION PRIME  
MINISTER SEEK INVITATION FOR PARLIAMENTARY  
DELEGATION TO ATTEND AT WASHINGTON

**Mr. Frank Oberle (Prince George-Peace River):** A supplementary to the Prime Minister. In the light of the admission by the Secretary of State for External Affairs that the Canadian submissions were made only lately, and