

Natural Gas Pricing

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I must say I do not believe there is at this point any real possibility of natural gas self-sufficiency in Quebec. There is no doubt a potential. Geological areas point to a potential for natural gas production in Quebec. Drillings are now being performed by a few companies, including Soquip, but I believe I am right in saying there is no self-sufficiency prospects at this time in Quebec. Of course we are hopeful that drillings especially on the continental shelf, will bring such a possibility. But this involves almost ten years of work.

Mr. Allard: Can the minister tell the House, since there was recently a natural gas price increase in Alberta, whether this will have any implications for the consumers using natural gas for heating, cooking and what not, and whether also this will have any impact on fuel oil?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, in my statement today I referred only to the price of national gas exported to the United States. There has been no decision yet about the price of domestic gas. I can however emphasize there will be talks with Alberta and other governments, including that of Quebec, on a possible increase in the domestic price. But there has been no decision yet.

[English]

Mr. McRae: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased with the statement of the minister, which indicates that the price of exported gas will be brought into line with prices within the United States. I think there are areas in the United States where gas is supplied at prices which are still higher than our prices. I accept, also—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I ought to remind the hon. member at the outset that it was never the intention that this period would be used for commenting on a minister's statement. It is a period for questioning, and if the hon. member has a question he should put it to the minister.

Mr. McRae: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that this action is related to increasing supplies, is the minister giving serious consideration to reducing demand and eliminating the kind of advertising, and so on, that is being conducted by the gas companies, certainly in my area, which would have the effect of increasing the use of gas when there is a shortage of supply?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): We do not, at the federal level, have direct jurisdiction over the retail marketing of natural gas. Our discussions with the provincial governments under the conservation program have dealt with the question of persuading provincial utilities to reduce, if possible, the demand for natural gas, including a change in the advertising message.

Mr. Gillies: Mr. Speaker, in arriving at the established prices the government did not accept in full the recommendation of the National Energy Board. Can we infer from that, that in the discussions on prices there was consultation with the producing provinces concerning what should be the domestic price in Canada?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Not directly, Mr. Speaker. The decision with regard to our phasing in of the export price was, of course, related to our concern that the impact

[Mr. Allard.]

be cushioned, so far as we felt was reasonably possible, on the export customer. There really is no conclusion that can be drawn at this point about the prospective level of domestic price increases. One thing can be said, however. In terms of revenue generated in the industry and in the provinces, we feel there is an element of compensation here which might provide them with a basis for expecting less than the export price increase from the domestic consumer.

Mr. Gillies: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is on that point. Of the \$583 million increased revenue per year to be generated by these sales, will the minister tell us what proportion will go to the federal government, what proportion will go to the provincial government, and what proportion will be left for the suppliers?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I must confess I have not done that detailed calculation, but I think the National Energy Board will be before the committee tomorrow. The hon. gentleman might like to put that question to the board, and perhaps he will get a more definitive estimate of the relative share.

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[Translation]

BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1975

APPOINTMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT OF BANKING AND RELATED OFFICIALS—ESTABLISHMENT OF BANKRUPTCY TRUST ACCOUNT

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-60, intituled "An Act respecting bankruptcy and insolvency".

Motion agreed to, bill read the first time and ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: 335, 549, 1,216, 1,800, 1,828, 1,913, 1,999, 2,006, 2,015, 2,026, 2,027, 2,029, 2,134, 2,152, 2,194, 2,208, 2,214, 2,241, 2,280, 2,281, 2,282 and 2,302.

If questions No. 1,746 and 2,011 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

[Text]

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT—PERSONNEL

Question No. 335—**Mr. Herbert:**

On June 30, 1974, how many full-time temporary employees were working for the Post Office Department and how many of these had