

Oral Questions

not want to be overly specific by presenting policy announcements which more properly would be made in the House. The second is that these very matters are being discussed in Toronto today by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources with his provincial counterparts, and we would not want to make a specific announcement until he has spoken to the provinces and we hear their response.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, of course I am always delighted to see the leader of any party get a lot of applause, but I would like to see what the right hon. gentleman's followers would do for him if he really did something.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister having indicated to the country last night that there would be allocations at the wholesale level, I would like to ask him in the House of Commons, where it is appropriate that such a statement be made, in what regions of the country does he anticipate the necessity of resorting to wholesale allocation of oil?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member reads the answer I just gave to the same question which he is repeating, he will find the answer there. I indicated that this problem of regions was being discussed in Toronto by the minister, and we do not want to make a formal decision on that until we have given the provincial governments a chance to react to our proposals.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but wonder why the Prime Minister made a statement like this on a national network if he did not wish to go further until there was consultation with the provinces. Let me ask my right hon. friend this question. In view of the indication by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources that the supply of oil may fall off by as much as 30 per cent in the Montreal area following the freeze-up, which I assume is related to the possibility of oil from Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi being cut off to the Portland-Montreal line, what steps is he taking personally, in view of the importance of this, to make certain that the governments of those two countries appreciate that this oil comes directly from Portland, Maine, to Canada and that there is no possibility of leakage into the United States? What measures is he taking, in view of the importance of this to the people of Quebec, to ascertain that those two countries take the same position as other Arabia countries seem to be taking at the present time in permitting deliveries through the pipeline to Montreal?

● (1150)

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that through the Department of External Affairs and the minister they are well informed of our position.

METHOD OF ALLOCATING OIL AT WHOLESALE LEVEL
THIS WINTER—POSSIBLE LEGISLATION

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Prime Minister some questions arising out of the policies he announced last night.

Mr. Nielsen: What policies?

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Prime Minister whether the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources will inform the House and the people of Canada on Monday about the machinery for the allocation of petroleum products at the wholesale level? Will there be legislation covering that suggestion in the near future?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that depends very much on the results of his talks with the provincial ministers in Toronto these days, and the question of legislation follows, obviously, from the results of those talks.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, in order to clarify the situation, am I to understand from the present answer of the Prime Minister that his statement last night to the effect that there would be allocation at the wholesale level was not a firm statement, that the decision has not yet been taken and depends on the conference with the provincial ministers, or is it the form of the allocation about which he is now talking?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the decision has been taken that allocation at the wholesale level is necessary. There are various ways of doing it and there are various regions to which it might apply. It is this mechanism which we are discussing with the provinces and which will be the object of the announcement of the minister next week.

MECHANISM TO CONTROL OIL PRICES AFTER
EXPIRATION OF FREEZE

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Prime Minister a question on a second subject. He said something to the effect that the price freeze in its present form—I think those were his words—would be lifted on January 31 but the government would not allow Canadian prices to go quite as high as world prices of oil. He used the term "world prices". May I ask the Prime Minister whether legislation is ready and, if so, what kind of mechanism is intended, and to what level is the price to be allowed to rise after January 31?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if I may correct the misunderstanding, what I did say is that we would not permit the price to rise to world levels no matter how high prices went. The minister has said this before. The sky is not the limit as far as we are concerned, and this is what I indicated last night. So far as the other part of the question is concerned the answer is yes, we will have to introduce legislation, certainly before the year's end, to indicate the way in which these prices will be determined.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We will return to the hon. member for York South and others for supplementaries but for the moment we will hear the supplementary question of the hon. member for Témiscamingue.