

minister give us his clear and unequivocal assurance that during this period of time no new government funding will be provided to Space Research Corporation until at least the full judicial process has been concluded and the outcome determined?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, I can assure the hon. lady that my department is not responsible in any way for the funding of Space Research, nor is it presently considering funding Space Research. Perhaps the hon. lady would direct her question to the minister whose responsibility it may be to consider such funding.

Mr. Clark: We have not been able to find one.

Miss MacDonald: Madam Speaker, I will gladly direct my question to the Prime Minister so that the House can be assured there will be no funding of Space Research Corporation during the period of time the *pré-enquête* in Quebec is under way. Also, is sufficient information available to determine whether or not criminal charges should be laid against the firm in Canada?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, earlier in the question period I had an opportunity to give an answer to a question along those lines.

Miss MacDonald: No, this is about funding.

Mr. Trudeau: I indicated that I was not aware of the facts and that I would take notice of the question.

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ENERGY

PROPOSAL TO EXPORT LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS FROM FAR NORTH

Mr. Peter Ittinuar (Nunatsiag): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It concerns a proposal by the Arctic Pilot Project group to produce liquefied natural gas from the far north for export to foreign markets.

A report in last Thursday's *Globe and Mail* stated that the gas would be sold either to the United States or to offshore buyers at the prevailing export price. Does the minister feel that it is in the interests of public policy to exploit northern gas reserves for the sole purpose of supplying foreign markets?

● (1450)

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the question of the export of natural gas or oil is one which comes first of all before the National Energy Board, which analyses the situation in the light of total supplies—whether there is a surplus of gas or a surplus of oil. The Energy Board makes such reviews regularly and its reports are published. Then it is up to the government of the day to decide whether or not to approve exports.

Oral Questions

At the present time, no application has gone before the National Energy Board and, obviously, no recommendation has been made to cabinet. I suspect it will be several months, if not years, before the cabinet is faced with the need for a decision of the kind the hon. member mentioned.

Mr. Ittinuar: *The Globe and Mail* of Thursday last also reported that "only a few details remain to be settled" before a supply contract can be signed with Panarctic Oils Limited, and that a letter of intent has been initialled by the Arctic Pilot Project group and its United States customers.

Since the project is now going through the environmental assessment and review process, and still must await the National Energy Board's decision, does the minister not feel that these agreements are premature, and do they not presuppose the outcome of the regulatory process?

Mr. Lalonde: I think there is some misunderstanding of the usual practice in this regard. This type of understanding or letter of intent is a regular feature of exchanges between potential buyers and potential sellers. As the hon. member knows, these letters of intent do not have any effect unless and until the Energy Board gives approval for exports.

As a matter of fact, the Energy Board will not hold hearings unless there are specific proposals for sale and specific offers for purchase. The Board will not entertain, I suspect, a hearing on what would be a purely hypothetical offer; there must be a specific proposal, and that is what is happening in this case. It is the standard practice of the Energy Board.

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CONVENTION CENTRES

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPMENT OF RIDEAU CENTRE

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Madam Speaker, in view of announcements made yesterday in Toronto and Montreal by several ministers concerning federal financial assistance to convention and trade centres, can the minister tell us what plans he has for Ottawa and, more specifically, for the long-standing commitment of the government in regard to the Rideau area development project?

Can he tell us, also, what he has in mind with regard to securing provincial financial contributions to the development of the Rideau Centre and indirectly to the convention centre?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I have been authorized by cabinet to pursue, as the Minister of Public Works who is responsible for reporting for the National Capital Commission, negotiations for the redevelopment of the Rideau area Crown lands in downtown Ottawa.

I have made attempts to continue negotiations with Ottawa region and city officials and with ministers of the province of Ontario. These negotiations are continuing, and I hope in short order to be able to give full particulars to the hon. member.