

Oral Questions

for the purpose of discussing this matter. The basic position I have taken with the Quebec government is that if they can provide absolute assurance as to security and price in the Montreal market we will indeed reconsider the decision.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Prime Minister. As the premier has stated openly and frankly that he is opposed to the building of the pipeline, may I ask the Prime Minister whether there was any thought of consultation and was there any consultation between the government and the province of Quebec before the announcement was made, and has that project now been withdrawn, as the national media have told the Canadian people?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, there were indeed consultations with Quebec officials, although not with Premier Bourassa, last July as a result of the energy analysis in which the security situation in the Montreal market and the Montreal pipeline were discussed. As I have indicated, the project remains the only really viable way of protecting the Montreal market unless the Quebec government can show absolutely that it will be protected by international contract. We will wait to see that.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Prime Minister on the same subject. He may see fit to answer it instead of leaving it to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It was the Prime Minister who made the statement last Tuesday. As I read the statement and listened to him, he made a firm statement that the oil pipeline will be extended to Montreal. Is that still the policy of the government or has there been any change in policy since last Tuesday?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the answer I would give would be exactly the same as that just given by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Mr. Lewis: May I ask the Prime Minister or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, either in a brief reply now or in a statement on motions, to inform the House exactly when consultations with the Quebec government took place before last Tuesday, what was the nature of those consultations, and what was the nature of any agreement, if an agreement was reached?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I referred to that in a previous answer. There were discussions on the subject in July. I think it is fair to say the position of the Quebec government is consistent with its present position, namely, that it was opposed to an extension into Montreal. We felt there was not sufficient evidence that Montreal could be protected in the position they have shown. I think it is also fair to say they have taken that position publicly since then.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for York South on the last supplementary for the moment in any event so it can recognize the hon. member for Champlain . . .

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

[Translation]

. . . and complete the first round of questions. We will then return to this matter if hon. members want to do so. For the moment, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) can ask his second supplementary question.

Mr. Lewis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

My supplementary is for either the Prime Minister or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the fact the Quebec government made it clear in July that it was opposed to the idea of a pipeline to Montreal, and in view of the statement by the Prime Minister that the federal government intended to build one, what change has there been in the situation to justify the minister reneging on the statement made by the Prime Minister?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the statement made the other day was subject to discussions with the province and with industry.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): As we pointed out, the purpose of building a pipeline would be to protect the Montreal market in relation to security and cost. If they can achieve that by international agreement, I would agree that the concept should again be reviewed. However, at the moment they have shown us no evidence whatsoever that they can protect their position, both from a security and cost standpoint, in light of international events.

[Translation]

PROPOSED EXTENSION OF OIL PIPELINE TO MONTREAL—
DISCUSSION BETWEEN OTTAWA AND QUEBEC

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put to the Prime Minister a specific question arising from those of the previous speakers.

Could he tell us whether he has met recently the Quebec premier or exchanged correspondence with him in connection with the federal project promoting the construction of a pipeline to carry western oil to Quebec?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has just indicated to the House, the discussions were held between his employees and provincial officials.

PROPOSED EXTENSION OF OIL PIPELINE TO MONTREAL—
POSITION OF QUEBEC

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

Could the Prime Minister or the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources indicate to the House whether the Quebec government formally voiced its disagreement in connection with that policy announced last Tuesday by the Prime Minister?