

Oral Questions

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent for this motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

● (1415)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

REQUEST THAT PROGRAM BE REPLACED WITH JOB-CREATING POLICIES

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, whose national energy plan has directly and effectively devastated the conventional Canadian oil and gas industry. Three hundred rigs worth over a billion dollars have fled to the United States. Of course the greatest tragedy was the tens of thousands of lost Canadian jobs which went with them. With the collapse of the Alsands megaproject, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and his national energy plan have now robbed 50,000 more Canadian construction and manufacturing workers of their jobs.

When will the minister scrap the national energy plan, which is a national disgrace, a national disaster, and nothing more than a massive tax grab by the government? When will the national energy plan be replaced with policies which would create jobs for Canadians instead of depriving them of their right to work?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I point out to the hon. member that at the present time the oil and gas sector is governed by agreements with the three producing provinces, the province of Alberta, the province of Saskatchewan, and the province of British Columbia. Those agreements have been welcomed by the governments of those provinces.

As far as stimulus to the industry is concerned, ever since the agreement the Government of Canada and the government of Alberta in particular have provided further improvements for the industry. The government of Alberta has announced a reduction in royalties which will total over a billion dollars this year, which is money which will go to the oil and gas industry. Analysts indicate that there will be more drilling in Canada this year than there was last year, and they expect a very active winter next year in the oil and gas sector.

With respect to activities in the past to which my hon. friend has referred, I remind him that many of those drilling rigs which moved to the United States are now not doing anything in the United States, and some of them are expected to return to this country.

Mr. Jarvis: Madam Speaker, the minister knows full well that in March of 1980 he could have had an agreement which would have guaranteed both Alsands and Cold Lake and that at this precise moment 100,000 Canadians would be working and the program would be two years down the line. Instead, those 100,000 Canadians, who could have been working at Cold Lake and at the Alsands plant, are in unemployment lines. That is the difference.

FUTURE OF MEGAPROJECT AT COLD LAKE, ALTA.

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Madam Speaker, Alsands is gone. The Alaska gas pipeline is going nowhere. Conventional oil and gas activity has gone down to the United States. The one major energy project the minister thinks he may be able to revive is the Imperial Oil megaproject at Cold Lake. What ironclad guarantee can the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources give Canadians that that project will be saved, along with the 50,000 direct jobs it would create?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. member that if, as he said, an agreement could have been reached in March of 1980, that agreement could have been reached in February, 1980, in January, 1980, or at any time in the whole of 1979 when his government was in office and when he was a member of the Tory government. If what he said is true, what did he do when he was in office, and what did his government do when it was in office? That government had nine long months to reach an agreement. It did not, and I suspect there was a good reason why it was not able to reach an agreement at that time.

With respect to the other point concerning Cold Lake, that is a matter for Imperial Oil to decide. The government of Alberta and the Government of Canada together have made what has been termed a very generous offer. If Imperial Oil has plans concerning Cold Lake, no doubt Imperial Oil will be in touch with us. In the meantime we will proceed with other activities in the energy field.

Mr. Jarvis: Madam Speaker, if the former government were still in power there would be 100,000 Canadians working at those two projects, and the minister knows it. Those megaprojects were not destroyed by my party; they were destroyed by the miniminds in the government opposite.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1420)

REQUEST THAT MINISTER RESIGN

Hon. Bill Jarvis (Perth): Madam Speaker, the government, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and the Minister of Finance have been saying for months that the Canadian economy is at the mercy of international conditions. The one sector that is unique to Canada in the industrialized world is energy. That is the one sector in which we are supposed to have such an advantage, but now,