

Oral Questions

We had sought, through the intermediation of the United States administration, a delay in the proceedings. The United States administration sought that delay in the proceedings. It was not granted. We regret that. We are now looking at every option which is available to the Government of Canada to support Canadian interests which must now pursue the matter through the courts. We have indicated to the companies which are involved in the appeal that they enter into that appeal with our support.

UNITED STATES REGULATIONS AFFECTING PRICE OF CANADIAN
NATURAL GAS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. This decision by a United States agency could cost the people of Alberta some \$400 million. In the case of softwoods, the United States tried to impose its law—and got away with it with the Conservative Government—on our provinces and the price for which they should sell their wood products. So too in this decision it is now insisting U.S. regulations affecting gas pricing ought to apply on our side of the border.

Given the serious impingement on Canadian sovereignty which is involved in this course of action, will the Prime Minister immediately contact President Reagan on a Head of Government to Head of Government basis, and let him know this is completely unacceptable to the people of Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, no one knows better than I, with all respect to the Hon. Member for Oshawa, the importance and impact of this decision upon the people and the producers of Alberta. That is why we used every instrument available to us to try to seek a delay in the proceedings. That effort, although it was supported by the United States administration, did not succeed.

We have now indicated we are prepared to be of as much help, as is feasible for this Government, to the private sector as it pursues the only course open to it. I take it what the Leader of the New Democratic Party is asking us to do is to go down and, I presume, shout at the President of the United States.

Mr. Broadbent: Oh!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Well, if he has some other course of action which is open in law, open in diplomacy, to the Government of Canada, we would be interested in knowing what that is.

● (1430)

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER COMMUNICATE WITH UNITED
STATES PRESIDENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to suggest what that should be to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, but I want to suggest it to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister said when he was in Lethbridge, and I quote him: "President Reagan has an obligation to act".

With respect, I would suggest that the people of Alberta think that the Prime Minister of Canada has an obligation to act.

Given the seriousness of this, not only for the people of Alberta, but because the matter goes to the heart of the notion of the sovereignty of a nation, making its own laws, pertinent to its own people, will the Prime Minister in a straightforward fashion get in touch with President Reagan and make it clear that in this decision, as well as in any other related trade embargo decision, Canadian law, and Canadian law only, ought to affect the people of Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the NDP may have noticed a statement on an unrelated but also important matter yesterday by the President of the United States in which he is, I think, signalling a very strong response to the contention of this Government in regard to sovereignty in the Arctic, which is most encouraging. I think it is an indication of the strong results that come from the policy adopted by our Government in asserting the sovereignty of Canada at all times.

In regard to this case that has been raised, we think that the FERC ruling marks a serious set-back in our joint efforts which we have developed since the Quebec meetings toward a market-oriented pricing arrangement concerning energy products. We believe that this kind of inhibition runs counter to the best interests of both countries. It is one that we vigorously and strongly protest. The Secretary of State for External Affairs has quite properly pointed it out in an appropriate context. We shall do so again and we will pursue it with all of the vigour and all of the leverage which this national Government has, to make sure that producers in western Canada, particularly Alberta, get justice to which they are entitled.

EFFECT OF DECISION ON ECONOMY OF ALBERTA

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I understand what the Americans said yesterday about Canadian sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic is that they accept Canadian sovereignty over Canadian territory. That is very nice.

But I want to say to the Prime Minister that what is involved here is something that directly affects the people of Alberta in terms of trade, and implicitly all other Canadians in terms of trade, namely, it is Canadian law on commercial matters that should be pertinent to Canadians' lives, not American law. That is the point.

Since the Prime Minister made the commitment in Alberta, and since he knows in the Accord that he reached with President Reagan two years ago in Quebec that the President made a specific commitment to move in this area, will the Prime Minister get in touch with President Reagan and make it clear that on a matter like this, that is inextricably connected