

Oral Questions

PROTECTION FOR CANADIAN FISHERMEN

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): If during the coming fishing season or any future fishing season Canadian fishing vessels are interfered with by U.S. vessels at or south of 54°-40' or the A-B line, or the Dixon Entrance boundary as it is known, will the Prime Minister take all necessary actions to protect Canadian fishermen and Canadian sovereignty in that area?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, it would seem that the hon. member is really confirming my answer by pretending the contrary when he says that his information is that no action was taken by External Affairs. I said action by appropriate government officials. My understanding is that it was done by authorities responsible for the coastguard or the fisheries.

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● (1450)

COMMUNICATIONS

EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR APPLICANTS APPLYING FOR CANCOM DISTRIBUTION LICENCES

Mr. Bruce Lonsdale (Timiskaming): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Communications. As the minister knows, today, June 17, is the proposed deadline for applications for terrestrial distribution of the Cancom television satellite package whereby distributors and municipalities in remote, rural and underserved areas must apply for licences from the CRTC under the Broadcasting Act, and for Department of Communications technical certificates under the Radio Act.

In view of the fact that small communities have shown a strong interest in being their own distributors and wish to purchase the equipment and the Cancom package directly, would the minister allow an extension of the Department of Communications deadline, and would he ask the Canadian Radio and Television Commission to extend their June 17 deadline for processing the initial applications until no later than June 30 in order to allow small communities and municipalities extra time to discuss this Cancom package with their town councils and taxpayers?

Hon. Francis Fox (Secretary of State and Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. It is indeed, a most important question for most Canadians living in remote or underserved communities. As far as the Department of Communications is concerned, I am more than willing to extend the deadline to June 30 of this year. As far as the CRTC is concerned, I will be pleased to bring the hon. member's recommendation to the attention of the CRTC. I have already done so and I would hope to have an answer for the hon. member sometime tomorrow.

ENERGY

EXTENSION OF NATURAL GAS PIPELINE TO NOVA SCOTIA

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Madam Speaker, I have a question on the topic of energy economic development for the Prime Minister and it is with regard to the commitment he made in January, 1980, for a natural gas pipeline to Nova Scotia. He will be aware that there are labour developments in Quebec which are causing the schedule to be disrupted. He will also recall that in the House, in answer to my friend from Halifax, the minister of energy gave a commitment that, if necessary, a bill will be brought into the House as a matter of government policy to make certain this pipeline which he promised would, indeed, be built.

Will the Prime Minister now confirm that this commitment he gave still stands, and will he go one step further as a matter of government or national policy and make a commitment that an LNG site in the Strait of Canso area, which possesses so many attributes for that development, will be selected so that a petrochemical industry, which will provide great economic impetus to Nova Scotia, can be established in that area?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the National Energy Program did provide for the construction of a gas pipeline towards the maritime provinces. We stated that it was a project of national interest and the government is still in favour of seeing this project through. The pipeline construction project in Quebec is behind schedule as a result of a welders' strike, but I hope the government of Quebec will be able to end that strike within a short time. As to the extension of the gas pipeline towards the maritime provinces, my hon. colleague knows that the National Energy Board has completed its hearings on that subject, and we are waiting for its report with respect to the precise conditions concerning the extension of that project towards the maritime provinces.

[English]

FULFILMENT OF COMMITMENT

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the minister's answer, but I want to ask him this. In view of the unanimous support from so many levels of government and from so many public officials who are influenced, I am sure, by the great strategic and natural advantages of the Medford Point site in the Strait of Canso area, will the minister of energy, again pursuant to his commitment as a national policy for energy for eastern Canada and to fulfil the Prime Minister's commitment, go one step further and indicate his support for that particular site, so that Nova Scotia will not just be a keeper of pipelines but can get feedstock for a petrochemical industry which will provide a great deal of economic development for that province? I am sure the Minister of Regional Economic Development will agree that this is one area where Nova Scotia has great potential for development.