

knows what havoc would be wrought by the closure of this plant—

[*Editor's Note: A disturbance having been created in the Public Gallery.*]

Madam Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr. Crosby: Does this count on my time?

[*Editor's Note: And the disturbance continuing.*]

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Madam Speaker: Order!

Mr. Crosby: One thing we must make clear in this Chamber is that if we are allowed to function as parliamentarians without outside interference, aided and abetted by the group to my left, nothing will happen in the name of democracy.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosby: I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, as he now knows, concerning the heavy water plants in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, operated by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. If the plants are closed 700 people or more will be thrown out of their employment and havoc will be wrought in Cape Breton and eastern Nova Scotia. Can the Minister tell us whether the Government will see that these plants will remain open, but if they are to close, does the Government have a program or plan for alternate employment for those persons directly or indirectly affected?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I would like to tell the Hon. Member that we are very much aware of the problem that the closing of these two heavy water plants might cause in this area. That is why the Government is looking at some other sort of solution than closing them. At this time we are having discussions with Atomic Energy of Canada to see what are the prospects of selling more heavy water, which would permit them to keep these plants open and, if we cannot keep them open, to try to find some alternative. We are taking the problem very seriously, as the Hon. Member is, and we will do our best to find an adequate solution.

USE OF COAL TO PRODUCE OIL

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Madam Speaker, on the question of alternative employment for persons whose employment might be lost through the closure of the heavy water plants in Cape Breton, may I ask the Minister is he aware of a program or project by Scotia Coal Synfuels which would result in using Nova Scotia coal to produce oil, with the assistance and use of natural gas? Is the Minister aware of that project, which I understand is headed by Alastair Gillespie, and will he assure the House that the former Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources who partly caused the energy problem in Canada, will not be called upon to correct it, and be the source of this alternate employment in Nova Scotia?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I am certainly aware of the project. My Department is paying for it.

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NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

CALCULATION OF REVENUE LOSS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources as well. In the fall of 1981 the Government's budget clearly pinned the whole fiscal future of the country on OPEC's continual increase of energy prices. The Government finally admitted last spring that its calculations in terms of anticipated revenue were out by some \$25 billion. The disarray demonstrated by OPEC the other day clearly means that these calculations are out by many more billions of dollars. Will the Minister give the House a carefully worded and accurate update on the calculation of the revenue loss to the people of Canada? Is it now \$30 billion, \$35 billion, or what is the figure?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, it would be entirely premature to try to answer the question put by the Leader of the New Democratic Party, because as yet, not all the consequences of yesterday's decision—or the lack thereof—by the OPEC countries are known. In the weeks or months to come, we shall see at what level the world oil price will stabilize, and at that time we shall be able to make our estimates accordingly. I believe last year's figures are still valid today, because the world price has been fairly stable during the past eight months.

[*English*]

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, it seems that everyone in the oil business but the Minister knows that the most recent estimates that he has made are wrong, that he is out by many billions of dollars once again, and that he has an obligation to this House, to explain soon just how many billions of dollars the Government has miscalculated.

DECREASE IN OPEC OIL PRICES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): I would like to go to my supplementary question. It is quite evident that if prices remain stable between now and July 1 the agreement entered into between the federal Government and the Provinces will mean that the anticipated increase of \$4 per barrel on July 1 will not be taking place. Given the needs of Canadian industries and Canadian consumers at this time, will the Minister guarantee to these groups that they will obtain exactly proportional benefits from declines in price increases by OPEC? Will he make sure that we get a reciprocal decline in prices for Canadian consumers and Canadian industries if the price goes down?