

conditions that may well prevent the accomplishment of what it was intended to accomplish.

Senator de Cotret: Honourable senators, I should like to read a short statement on this matter which I made public today.

The Government of Canada remains fully committed to the implementation of the Canada-U.S. Agreement for the Transportation of North Slope gas from Alaska to the Lower 48 states. Along with the significant industrial benefits to Canada, this project facilitates the access to Canadian gas reserves in the Mackenzie Delta and the Beaufort Sea.

Furthermore, the government is of the view that the pre-building of the southern sections of the system for the export of the Alberta gas to the U.S. markets in advance of the arrival of Alaskan gas is an important component of that project, both for its early completion and for the substantial benefits it would bring to Canada. I share the views expressed by the former government when the two governments, on March 3, 1979, agreed to, and I quote, "seek ways whereby any additional gas exports, should they be authorized, could facilitate timely construction of the entire Northern Gas Pipeline."

These factors were important considerations taken into account by the government when it approved the National Energy Board Gas Export Report last Thursday. It is the government's view that the board's report goes a substantial way to encouraging the start of this much delayed project. I am concerned, therefore, by the report that the project's sponsors in Canada are disappointed with it. I note, however, that the President of Foothills has indicated he wishes to discuss this matter with appropriate government officials.

I have met with the President of Foothills, as well as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Northwest Alaskan Pipeline Company, Mr. John G. McMillian. I have listened to their concerns, and I can tell honourable senators that those concerns are under very active consideration.

Senator van Roggen: You did not touch on the last part of my question, and that is that if there is indeed a problem found by the government in the wording of the National Energy Board's decision, do mechanisms exist for the amendment of that decision without having to re-open the matter to public hearings, with all of the delays that that would entail, and keeping in mind that such delays would then put the timing mechanisms in that decision out of whack entirely insofar as supplies by independent Canadian producers are concerned?

Senator de Cotret: I think there are a number of ways of remedying the situation. Certainly, the National Energy Board is looking at the situation. It is my understanding that, in the event of the wording being misinterpreted, they could change it without holding public hearings. That is something I would have to verify.

Senator van Roggen: It would be difficult to change the reference from three years to eight years, and pretend it is a misprint. In any event, I thank the minister for his answer.

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA ACT

LANGUAGE RIGHTS—JUDGMENT OF THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA

Senator Robichaud: Honourable senators, I have a supplementary question on the subject of the Supreme Court of Canada judgment.

[*Translation*]

Please allow me, honourable senators, to continue my remarks in French.

I should like to ask the Minister of Justice whether, after all the changes made in our courts since confederation—I ask him this for the record because I imagine I know the answer—he considers the ruling brought down this morning by the Supreme Court of Canada to be perfect and final on the matter of language rights in this country?

Senator Guay: It certainly is.

Senator Flynn: The decision, as such, is final. It may be, however, that it has not solved all the problems one could think of, and that other procedures, other legal procedures, could intervene, asking the Supreme Court either to rule on certain aspects on which it has not ruled, or to decide other matters which are not directly or necessarily related. But, since its judgment cannot be appealed—I think my learned friend knows that appeals to the Privy Council have now been abolished a long time—it is final.

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

POSSIBLE IMPOSITION OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTROLS

Senator Austin: Honourable senators, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. I would like to ask whether it is under his direction that the government is studying the question of imposing currency controls and whether, indeed, the government feels that this is a matter that, raised at this time in a public way, will be of benefit to the Canadian economy and to the value of Canadian currency?

● (1500)

Senator de Cotret: To the best of my knowledge there is no such study. May I ask if your question is as to whether or not we are looking at the possibility of imposing foreign exchange controls?

Senator Austin: That is the question I am asking.

Senator de Cotret: To the best of my knowledge, no, and, as minister, I can assure you that there is no such study going on under my direction in any of my various portfolios, and I am not aware of any such study on the part of the government.

Senator Austin: Does the minister's statement indicate that he thinks that such a study would not be useful to Canadian government interests at this particular time?

Senator de Cotret: Well, I can answer this personally—and perhaps I shouldn't. I can tell you I do not need a study to