

Inquiries of the Ministry

Affairs has said about the meeting in Washington between Canadian and United States officials, may I ask if the Canadian delegation in its official capacity suggested any alternative route or method for transporting this crude petroleum? If they did, on what study did they base their recommendations?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the short answer is no, the Canadian government did not suggest an alternative route. The delegation that went with the authority of the Canadian government went to discuss the ecological dangers of building the TAPS line, which I think is the correct procedure at the present time.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question. What knowledge and studies did the Canadian officials use in discussing this question with the United States officials? What study did Canadians use? Did they use an American study or one of their own?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government has had considerable experience in cleaning up oil spills on the ocean.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the Leader of the Opposition on a supplementary and then the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands. We have been deep in oil for the last 40 minutes and perhaps we should then go to another subject.

INVITATION BY MINISTER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND
NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT TO UNITED STATES TO
BUILD PIPELINE THROUGH NORTHERN CANADA

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development was speaking for the government of Canada when he apparently invited the Americans to come in and build a pipeline through Northern Canada? Was this the expression of a government invitation? If so, has the government had second thoughts about it?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would have to check what my colleague said before I could answer that question.

PROPOSED TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE SYSTEM—NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNITED STATES PRESIDENT OR CABINET MEMBERS

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, while all members would agree with the Acting Prime Minister that Canada should not build a pipeline through the north as an alternative to TAPS without very wide discussion and investigation, since Mr. George Lincoln's statement would appear to be a refined form of blackmail I return to the question I asked the Acting Prime Minister: Has the time not come for direct ministerial discussions on this very important matter instead of leaving it to officials until such time as the American government has made a decision?

[Mr. Woolliams.]

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Parliament of Canada enacted the National Energy Board Act which gives that board authority to deal with applications for the building of pipelines. I am quite sure the hon. member would not wish the Canadian government to intervene before the National Energy Board has had the opportunity of looking at any application for the building of a pipeline, because the National Energy Board can take into account all relevant factors.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

EAST PAKISTAN CONFLICT—DISCUSSIONS WITH INDIAN
AND PAKISTANI REPRESENTATIVES—PROVISION OF
RELIEF SUPPLIES

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister. Has he now had conversations with representatives of the governments of India and Pakistan and can he advise about the situation in East Pakistan, particularly with reference to the acceptance by the authorities there of relief supplies?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have had extensive conversations in recent days at several levels about the situation in Pakistan. The Canadian High Commissioner has been for some days now in East Pakistan and he will be submitting a report shortly. We have also been in touch with other governments which have been co-operating in the economic development of Pakistan and with international organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The World Bank has a senior representative in Islamabad. The Canadian government is trying to obtain a balanced assessment of the situation quickly. I have said many times that we are ready to contribute relief assistance and what we need to do now is to determine how to make this aid effective.

If you will permit me just a moment, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should say that the League of Red Cross Societies over the weekend appealed for relief assistance for refugees from East Pakistan who are now in India. The government is making an immediate initial contribution through the Canadian Red Cross in response to this appeal. This particular contribution is expected to be spent largely on medicines, in addition to any contributions already made by the Canadian Red Cross. We have been in touch with the world food program and we hope that we can provide help in that way.

Mr. Macquarrie: May I ask the Acting Prime Minister if the Pakistan authorities are now accepting the aid of these relief agencies and allowing them into East Pakistan?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, we have had no requests whatsoever from the Pakistan government as such. The announcement that I was making was about the relief of refugees from Pakistan who are now in India.