

Oral Questions

Hon. Member is that his facts are wrong. That is quite fundamental. The trend line has been down for a government share of public expenditures. He simply has to look at the facts.

Mr. Hees: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question to set the record straight.

Madam Speaker: Order. The Hon. Member for Vancouver Centre.

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ENERGY**EXPORT PRICE OF NATURAL GAS**

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my question would be directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources if I could have his attention. On October 7 I asked the Minister if he was planning to reduce the export price for natural gas since the border price set by the Minister is too expensive for our American customers. In his answer the Minister said that there is no need to move at this time.

Since top U.S. energy officials in Washington are insisting that Canada will announce more cuts in natural gas export prices by the end of the month, and since these comments follow discussions with government officials here in Ottawa, is the Minister misleading the House, or is he too busy campaigning for the Liberal leadership to be able to be on top of the affairs of his Department?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I think that the Hon. Member will see by the end of the month if the price is going down or not. Next week will be the end of the month, so she will know by that time.

Miss Carney: We shall certainly watch for the date at the end of the month.

EXPORTATION OF ELECTRICITY

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is also addressed to the same Minister. It has been reported that the Minister is willing to take steps to increase electricity exports to the United States. How can the Government justify promoting hydro exports when it is refusing to take similar steps to help the natural gas industry which is operating at about 40 per cent of its export capacity? How can the Minister justify helping one energy industry when it refuses to respond to the very real concerns of another, the oil and gas industry?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): First, Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member is wrong. We have taken two steps since the Spring to help the situation regarding the export of natural gas. We have reduced the price to \$4.40 from \$4.94, and we have given an incentive

price to added quantities of gas that were to be taken by the market.

Regarding the export of electricity to the Americans, I, of course, am very much interested in exporting it because there is a surplus. The hydro companies in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick are trying to sell electricity. I told the people in New York that they should perhaps think a little bit about ceasing to burn the coal that creates acid rain, and should buy clean electricity from Canada.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**ACID RAIN—ACTION AGAINST SULPHUR EMISSIONS**

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. I would like to compliment him and his predecessor, and his predecessor's predecessor, on their long and arduous struggle with the acid rain question.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Fraser: The Minister will know that on this issue he has the strongest support from this Party for his representations to his American colleagues. Since the recent meeting with Secretary Schultz and EPA Administrator Ruckelshaus, is the Minister prepared to make a commitment on behalf of this country that, whether the U.S. administration goes ahead now or later, this country will begin immediately aiming for a 50 per cent reduction of sulphur emissions?

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, dealing with the Hon. Member's preamble, I would like to congratulate him for his touch of modesty. As to the commitment he is asking for, Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member knows that Canada has already taken steps, as was explained yesterday to another Hon. Member, toward achieving reduction of emissions by 25 per cent. That is now being achieved in two of the major Provinces of the country. As to the balance, in order to achieve emissions of 20 kilograms per hectare per year, we know that we cannot achieve that alone. That is corroborated by a statement made yesterday in Washington by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, James Medas, who said that Canada cannot begin solving its own acid rain problems without a joint policy with the U.S.A.

REQUEST FOR CANADIAN COMMITMENT

Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Madam Speaker, as Hon. Members on this side have said before, the problem cannot be solved by Canada alone. In view of the fact that the problem will only be solved in the United States if the Americans, who are allied with us in this campaign, are given sufficient support by this country, is the Minister prepared to make a commitment to the American government, and to Congress and the various public interest and citizens' groups