

Nonetheless, even at prices which are lower than world prices, the production of electricity from oil in Nova Scotia is expensive. The hon. member asks how much it costs. That will depend, obviously, on the forecast of prices he makes. It will depend mainly on the kind of agreement we can get with the government of Alberta. I can tell him that at my last meeting with the government of his province, the government of that province presented me with a potential bill of \$555 million representing federal subsidies they would like to obtain over the next seven years solely for the cushioning of the cost of its oil-generated electricity and helping in the transformation from oil. This is over half a billion dollars for the province of Nova Scotia alone.

At that time I indicated that indeed this was a matter we were ready and willing to look at, because it is essential that the electricity produced in Nova Scotia be "off oil" but obviously the federal government needed to have the resources from any future oil agreement which would allow it to help a province like Nova Scotia.

Mr. Crouse: Basically, what the minister has told the committee tonight is that when campaigning, and this includes all the Liberals who campaigned in Nova Scotia, he and his colleagues were aware, as the Prime Minister must have been aware, of the views of the National Energy Board as they apply to this problem. In effect they railroaded the people of Nova Scotia with that promise. I stress the point that there is no equivocation in that speech by the Prime Minister. The words are: "We will immediately bring that gas pipeline to Halifax". That is the statement, and it has been indicated tonight that it was nothing more than an election promise.

● (2140)

I will go on to two other questions. I have more if my time permits, but I would like to ask the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources if he is prepared at some future time to indicate to the National Energy Board, in support of a re-application of Q and M, that he is prepared to subsidize the cost of the transmission of gas to the maritimes in the same way that the government now subsidizes domestic oil shipped to Montreal.

I do not want to ignore the entire panel, so while I am on my feet I would like to leave one with—somebody is calling out "stop". If he does not wish to participate in the hearings here this evening, he is free to leave or he is free to rise and seek to ask a question. I do not like being interrupted, and if the hon. member would stand and indicate who he is—

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The hon. member for South Shore has the floor.

Mr. Crouse: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope you will keep the rabble on the other side quiet because this is a committee—

An hon. Member: Shut up.

Supply

Mr. Crouse: He says I should shut up, Mr. Chairman. I think you should ask him to withdraw that. That is not being very parliamentary or constructive.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Out, Olivier.

Mr. Crouse: Yes, perhaps he should leave because he is suffering from pain in the belly or something.

I have a very simple question for the President of the Treasury Board. Would he give us an update on the privatization program for certain Crown corporations? Maybe I could have both of those answers in sequence.

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Chairman, first, I am sorry that the hon. member has distorted so obviously the statement that he himself quoted at the beginning of his own intervention. He read it into the record, and I am sure the public will be able to see his statement for what it is, a straight distortion of a statement made by the Prime Minister. The statement he just made is completely false, and he should withdraw it.

When the hon. member reads *Hansard* tomorrow he will see that the words he read into the record were not attributed to this party or to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister said, and I quote again for the record, in case the hon. member forgot what he himself read, "A Liberal government will take immediate action to ensure full co-operation of all parties in the construction of a natural gas pipeline to Quebec City and the maritimes".

Mr. Crouse: That's right.

Mr. Lalonde: That is on the record. That is what we stand by, and that is our commitment. We are not welshing or withdrawing from that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: Indeed, in order to ensure the full co-operation of the parties concerned, I have already consulted with the governments of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and I have already reported to this House on some of the issues and the problems.

The hon. member should remember that in January and February his party was in office. He must have remembered that, although he may not have had the chance of participating very much in that government.

An hon. Member: He was in New Zealand.

Mr. Lalonde: I am advised that he was in New Zealand at the time, but I do not think it is true. He was campaigning in his riding like an honest candidate.

Mr. Crouse: I am still here.

Mr. Lalonde: However, how dare he say to this House that we knew what was going on at the National Energy Board and what the conclusions of the National Energy Board were? The National Energy Board was either still holding its hearings or was considering the evidence. We were in the opposition. I