

Adjournment Debate

time this government took office. But this problem might be partially alleviated, Mr. Speaker, if the guarantees in the National Energy Program were fulfilled. Those guarantees include the delivery of natural gas to Halifax and that area at the same prices paid in Toronto. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the government guaranteed some \$500 million to subsidize the extension of the east coast pipelines and other pipeline for which construction is required.

● (2215)

The question today is whether the government will deliver on the promises contained in the National Energy Program. First we must ask: why the delay? The National Energy Program indicated that natural gas would be delivered to Halifax by the end of 1983. Now the estimate is that we will not receive natural gas until at least 1985. In the meantime, people on the east coast will pay atrocious prices for gasoline, and particularly the much increased price for home heating oil.

There is more involved than simply the delivery of natural gas. The pipeline will enable the east coast to participate in the Arctic Pilot Project which, in turn, involves the construction of a very substantial LNG terminal at a point yet undisclosed on the east coast. The project itself will involve the expenditure of millions of dollars and many man-years of employment. The goal of the government's policy, which includes—and has to include—delivery of natural gas to the east coast, is the creation of circumstances in which those on the east coast will pay the same price for energy as the average Canadian pays. That has been the goal of the Government of Nova Scotia in its energy policy, to ensure that Nova Scotians and others on the east coast have the same benefits as other Canadians.

Mr. Roy MacLaren (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I will not spend any time on the curious arithmetic of the hon. member opposite but, rather, I will respond to his points about the Trans Quebec and Maritimes Pipeline. He will recall that on November 9 the minister stated that this pipeline project is one of the top priorities of the government. The government has committed considerable financial support for this pipeline because it is, in fact, a key element of our strategy to reduce the vulnerability to supply interruptions of those areas of eastern Canada that are presently dependent on imported oil.

The pipeline extension will open up new domestic markets for natural gas from western Canada. Under the terms of the September 1 memorandum of agreement between the governments of Canada and Alberta, Alberta will make market development incentive payments to the federal government to help fund national programs to expand domestic natural gas distribution systems, thereby making this less expensive energy source available to more Canadians. The governments of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are strongly supportive of the concept of natural gas utilization in the Maritimes. There is widespread backing of the TQ & M Pipeline project.

In beginning work on the gas pipeline extension to Quebec city the company had run into some difficulties, including

problems with labour unions, and these resulted in some construction delays. Moreover, the company had encountered problems relating mainly to route selection. Normally, a company obtains approval from the province in which it plans to build a pipeline before appearing before the National Energy Board. In this case the company appeared before the NEB prior to Quebec route approval. Subsequently Quebec insisted on route changes which were later endorsed by the National Energy Board.

On November 20 the minister announced that the pipeline company would file a modified routing application with the NEB for the section of the proposed line between Lévis-Lauzon and Edmundston, New Brunswick. After discussions this past autumn it was agreed that the company would be asked to reconsider its project for the La Pocatière-Matane section with a view to filing a new application with the board. The company plans to ask the National Energy Board for authority to route the pipeline through Rivière-du-Loup and Cabano before its entrance into New Brunswick. This route modification will facilitate the connection of a lateral that would serve at least the Rivière-du-Loup-Matane axis. As a consequence of the company's decision to file a new application, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) recommended to his cabinet colleagues that they approve the NEB's recommendation to construct a pipeline to Nova Scotia which was handed down last August. Cabinet approval was given on December 10.

Within a few days it can be expected that the NEB will issue a certificate of public convenience and necessity to the company to build the pipeline through to the Maritimes, subject to the terms and conditions spelled out in the board's recommendation to the cabinet last August. These requirements include completion of purchase and sales contracts, financial information, and final pipeline design data.

All these initiatives provide assurances that the difficulties that had confronted this major pipeline project are being successfully resolved. There is every indication that natural gas deliveries will reach New Brunswick by 1984 and Nova Scotia by 1985.

THE BUDGET—EFFECT ON FORMER CNR AND VIA RAIL EMPLOYEES. (B) REQUEST THAT MINISTER INTERCEDE ON BEHALF OF RETIRED RAILWAY EMPLOYEES

Mr. Laverne Lewycky (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak tonight about a question I raised on December 9 regarding the budget of November 12 and the effect the budget will have on former CNR and VIA Rail employees. At that time the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Bussièrès) said my concerns about CNR and VIA employees would be considered. In his response he talked about the concern of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) with regard to the equity issue. It is on that matter of equity that I want to address my concern to the minister tonight. I know that one of the concerns in the budget was to close some of the loopholes for high-income earners. I remind the House that these loopholes were created