

Oral Questions

reassured, let me say that our delegation in going to Geneva with a firm mandate to negotiate hard on behalf of Canada.

Mr. Carter: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister or his colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, outline on motions and put up on public record the position which this government will take at the Law of the Sea Conference which is to begin in Geneva on March 17.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I appeared before the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence last night, and in my opening statement set out once again the position which Canada will take at the Law of the Sea Conference. As the deliberations proceed, I will be prepared to answer questions on the details of our presentation at the conference. I assure my hon. friend that the position which is well known as the Canadian position will be upheld at the conference.

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INDUSTRY**SHIPBUILDING SUBSIDY PROGRAM—AMOUNT DUE TO MARINE INDUSTRIES LIMITED**

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member for Northumberland-Durham asked me how much the subsidy payment is outstanding under our commitments under the subsidy program when he put his question on the relationship of subsidy payments and the dredging contracts. I have just been informed that payments totalling \$1,190,000 with respect to Marine Industries Limited under the shipbuilding subsidy agreements are due.

MICROSYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL—AMOUNT OF CONDITIONAL AND UNCONDITIONAL GRANTS

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, may I clarify an answer I gave the member for Winnipeg North to do with grants to Microsystems International. I had indicated that \$13 million, of the total of close to \$30 million in grants was conditional, and \$16 million was unconditional. On checking, I find that the grants totalling \$30.4 million were all conditional grants.

Mr. Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I assume, since Your Honour allowed the minister to get up and partially answer a question on the basis of knowledge he must have had when the question was asked in the first place, that you will permit me to ask a supplementary question arising from that answer. My point of order is this: I wonder if the minister would be good enough, at the same time, to indicate to us the total amount owing under both the income tax charges and the fraud and conspiracy charges, as indicated in the indictments relating to Marine Industries Limited, and whether these actually cover the amounts he is now talking about.

[Mr. LeBlanc (Westmorland-Kent).]

If he cannot answer that, I wonder if the Solicitor General can.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PETRO-CANADA ACT**MEASURE TO ESTABLISH CROWN CORPORATION**

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that Bill C-8, to establish a national petroleum company, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure today to rise and move that Bill C-8, to establish a national petroleum company, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works. This bill is a most important element in the government's long-term planning to secure adequate supplies of energy to meet our national needs. It is firmly rooted in the basic objectives of our energy and resource policies which are, to ensure for Canadians adequate and reliable supplies at reasonable prices, as well as a direct share in the wealth which development of our resources generates.

My emphasis on long-term planning is deliberate and necessary. We harbour no illusions that establishment of a national petroleum company is likely to lead to early and spectacular results in terms of massive energy development or financial success. I want the House to know that we are going into this venture in full realization of the fact that the hazards of exploration risk, technical and commercial uncertainty await this venture. We are nevertheless convinced that the national interests now require a significant degree of federal public enterprise in the oil and natural gas area. This enterprise will complement other federal efforts in the uranium and nuclear sectors, and reinforce provincial activities in electric power.

The vehicle we have chosen to carry out this function is a national petroleum company. Its organization, structure, objects, powers and duties are described in the bill and summarized in the Administrator's recommendation attached to it. The bill is neither lengthy nor complex, and detailed discussion of its provisions should be held for the committee stage. I do wish to spend some time, however, explaining to the House why this legislation has been brought forward.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, hon. members will recall that the energy policy review which I published nearly two years ago included extensive description of the role of state participation in the energy industry in Canada and abroad together with a careful analysis of the benefits and drawbacks which might stem from the creation of a Canadian national petroleum company. The advantages and disadvantages as represented in the review appeared to balance