

Adjournment Debate

Hon. Bob Kaplan (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, I have indicated in this House, and when I was in British Columbia, that this move is now on, and it is obviously not a very popular decision for the people of Victoria. I fully understand that they would prefer to have the RCMP "E" Division headquarters in their city.

I therefore want to take the opportunity to briefly review how this decision was made. I say at the outset that the decision is the responsibility of the Solicitor General of Canada, under the regulations of the RCMP Act. The force has kept me informed of developing plans to move the headquarters. Until my formal approval was attached to the plan, it did not become—if I could put it that way—an official plan. Even now pieces of it require approval of the Treasury Board before implementation, and approval will not even be sought immediately for all of them. It is a two to three-year gradual phase-in process which I think will have a minimum impact on Victoria. However, approvals will proceed along that course.

One hon. member opposite shouted that I do not know the difference between Vancouver and Victoria. I do know the difference; but even more important, the commissioner of the RCMP knows the difference because almost two decades of his career have been spent in British Columbia. It is no secret that he always regarded its establishment in Victoria as a less effective location than Vancouver.

● (2210)

The proposed move did not come from an easterner of someone who does not know what is happening in the west; the move is being organized, planned and put to me by experts who know very well what the needs are for efficient policing in British Columbia.

I have a copy of a letter which Allan Williams sent to me a few days ago. I would be happy to table it if the rule and hon. members would permit. The letter makes it very clear that Allan Williams had discussions on the subject, and that his view is that the implementation of the plan will contribute to an improved delivery of police service to the people of British Columbia.

Our responsibility is to deliver good police service to the people of British Columbia. The attorney general, after his staff was consulted, and after writing and saying he recognizes that he is being consulted and that this decision would contribute to an improved delivery of service, then urges me to make further investigation into the matter. I know it is an unpopular decision but it is not for him to make; it is for this government to make.

I feel that we have acted in a responsible way and I hope, in a larger sense, the people of British Columbia recognize all the advantages of the efficient and improved policing that the force itself has put to me, that the attorney general of the province has approved on policing grounds, and that I fully believe will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policing—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired.

I would remind the House that this is an adjournment motion. If the minister wishes to communicate copies of correspondence to the hon. member I suggest that he simply send it to him.

ENERGY—NEW BRUNSWICK OIL SHALES DEVELOPMENT

Hon. J. Robert Howie (York-Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) to explore the development potential of oil shale in the province of New Brunswick for two reasons: first, because it is important to Canada as we drive toward energy self-sufficiency and, second, because it is important to New Brunswick in that it would provide badly-needed jobs and be a tremendous stimulant in the field of development.

I should like to say a word about what the oil shales comprise. The oil shales are found in the Albert geological formation which in many ways can be likened to a large saucer. It results from an ancient lake. If I might go back to my analogy of the saucer, the centre of that saucer would be located in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the perimeter of the saucer would be developed from the centre at an angle of approximately 40 degrees. The oil shales are near the surface in the province of New Brunswick; they are found in the county of Albert and stretch from an area north of Moncton to an area midway between Sussex and Saint John. The shales comprise about 2,500 square miles in southeastern New Brunswick.

Around the turn of the century the local people discovered the potential of the shales and used it as an energy source. I do not think it was a viable commercial operation but I have seen what is seemingly a rock of oil shale ignited by a match which burned freely. I saw that happen in the last month.

The process of obtaining oil from the shale is to first grind the shale to a granular form, put it in a retort, and heat it to 900 degrees Fahrenheit. The oil then flows out through the bottom and gas escapes from the top. If the gas which escapes from the top is captured it can become the energy source for sweating the oil from the shale.

This process is quite similar to that which is employed in the tar sands of Alberta. A small pilot project is under way in Colorado in the United States operated by the Occidental Petroleum Company.

When the shale is located at a greater depth, tunnels are bored into the rock, a combustion chamber is hollowed out, fire ignites in the combustion chamber and heats to 900 degrees. The oil then flows through the bottom where vertical tunnels gather it and it is pumped to the surface. This is another technique that is used in Alberta. It is more costly and it is used for deep-seated shale.

Significantly, about one-third of the shale in New Brunswick is surface and can be mined in an open pit or in the