

Mr. Clark: —the simple and elemental fact which has apparently escaped him to this date, that the export of surplus natural gas now will have two immediately beneficial impacts upon Canada. One is that it will save a number of small Canadian companies, which cannot afford to keep their reserves locked in, from bankruptcy or from sale to foreign ownership; and the second is that the export of natural gas, as well as the positive impact it has on our balance of payments situation will stimulate exploration in this country, which will bring on new reserves of natural gas and oil and move this country again toward energy self-sufficiency.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Symes: Talking about knowledge of the industry, this is the same Prime Minister who a few months ago was running around telling Japan and Israel that we had a surplus of oil and also, more recently, finding himself able to export the surplus supply of fuel oil to the United States. If this was not bad enough, he has now indicated that he is prepared to sell out the future security of Canadians in terms of substituting natural gas for imported oil by allowing a massive export to the United States. For the sake of the Prime Minister's own credibility and the domestic security of Canadians in future energy supplies—

• (1125)

An hon. Member: Speech.

Mr. Symes: —will he now reverse his decision to export this gas to the United States?

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I will not reverse the decision. What I will do is suggest to the hon. member, who pretends to be an energy critic, that before he rises in the House to criticize the National Energy Board report he should read the report—

An hon. Member: What credibility does the NEB have?

Mr. Clark: —because the report made it abundantly clear that the gas surpluses that were found, or the amounts of gas that will be available for export are surplus to Canadian needs, including needs contemplating substantial substitution of oil to natural gas.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: The hon. member shouted from his seat, "What credibility does the National Energy Board have?" Considerably more than the hon. member.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

EXPORT OF NATURAL GAS TO UNITED STATES—EFFECT ON VALUE OF DOLLAR

Mr. John Evans (Ottawa Centre): Thank you very much for your applause! Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Minister of State for International Trade. An

increase in natural gas exports of the magnitude we are talking about here will lead to an increase in the value of the dollar, which will inescapably operate to the detriment of secondary industry in Canada and the development of secondary industry.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Evans: That shows how much they know about economics. I should like to ask the minister: has the government analysed the effects of the projected gas export levels on the value of the Canadian dollar, which the minister indicated would earn about \$13.2 billion at today's export prices? If so, will the House be informed of the results of this analysis and its effect on secondary industry development in Canada?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of State for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out to the hon. member that the value of the Canadian dollar slipped slightly today, so I do not think what he is expecting to happen will necessarily happen.

Mr. MacEachen: Check with Hnatyshyn.

Mr. Wilson: We are pleased that there will be less pressure on the balance of payments as a result of this decision to allow increased exports of natural gas. I do not think that it will have the significant impact on the level of the dollar that the hon. member suggests. I would, further, point out to the member that there is a range within which the Canadian dollar can move which will still allow Canadian industry to maintain the strong competitive position it has now in industry relative to world markets.

ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY, OR OIL SELF-SUFFICIENCY— GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. John Evans (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary to the Prime Minister. I would ask the Prime Minister if he would clarify to the House whether the policy of this government is energy self-sufficiency, or oil self-sufficiency. If, indeed, it is energy self-sufficiency, will he tell us, since we have a 6 per cent surplus of energy in this country now, is it the policy of this government to export natural gas to ensure that he needs an energy self-sufficiency policy in the future?

An hon. Member: Right on.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, once again, I respect the hon. member's qualifications and formation as an academic economist. What I want to draw to his attention is that in the search for oil, in the search for natural gas and other energy sources, it is necessary for us to have incentives for the practical people in the field who go out to look for new sources of oil and new sources of natural gas.

One of the consequences of exporting natural gas which is clearly surplus to our needs—including the need to have enough for substitution purposes—is to encourage practical