

Oral Questions

portion of the pipeline discussed at all in the September negotiations?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I have no recollection whatsoever that the matter was even discussed. Certainly, no provision was made in the agreement or in the negotiations leading up to the agreement regarding the prebuilding of the pipeline. In the legislation which is under preparation at present, which I hope to introduce reasonably soon to the House, there is no provision for the prebuilding of the pipeline. So it is a matter which has to be dealt with on different grounds from the general plan under which we are presently operating and the assumptions contained in the negotiations.

NORTHERN PIPELINE—ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PREBUILDING SOUTHERN SECTION

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): I direct my question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and ask whether he can explain the comments that he made outside the House yesterday which were reported on the CTV eleven o'clock news, namely, that the prebuilding of the southern portion of the pipeline could jeopardize the timing of the northern construction and delay completion of the pipeline until 1984-85, at a cost of perhaps \$1 billion and thousands of jobs for Canadians. Does this mean that the government is not yet convinced of the benefits of preconstruction and is dragging its feet? Also, why is the government considering further delays in the building of the pipeline, when a short while ago they rejected a similar request by the Council of Yukon Indians?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, that report is quite erroneous.

NORTHERN PIPELINE—PROJECTED DATE OF COMPLETION

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I direct a further supplementary to the President of the Privy Council who may wish to answer this question instead of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Is there a possibility that the date for the completion of the pipeline that is mentioned in the pipeline agreement might be changed, and does that mean that Canada will be in a position to renegotiate the other conditions of the agreement? Does it mean that the government may be able to recoup some of the possible benefits they gifted away when they negotiated the agreement?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council): Without accepting the allegations contained in the last part of the question, may I point out that a timetable is provided in the agreement for the construction and operation of the pipeline, and there have been no discussions of any kind leading to a change in the provisions of that agreement. So I must say that I am at a loss to understand why there should be any doubt whatsoever as to the intention of the government to proceed with the legislation as quickly as

[Mr. Nielsen.]

possible and to proceed with the construction and operation of the pipeline according to plan.

INVENTORY OF NATURAL GAS—EFFECT ON ENERGY POLICY

Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George—Peace River): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It refers to the reliability of the reports that have recently come from his officials with respect to the inventory of natural gas located in western Canada, which would indicate that both domestic and export commitments can be met until the year 1990. I ask the minister whether these reports and forecasts were based on located supplies, or do they include such areas as the Beaufort Sea? Also, can the department provide any assurance as to the reliability of the forecasts, or will such assurance be sought before these forecasts are used to formulate further energy policies, relating them to the construction of a pipeline in the north?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, all forecasts involve a series of probabilities. We have tried to make that quite clear in the various reports we have put before the Canadian people and before the House. As to the suggestion to which I believe the hon. member is referring, that there might be more gas in the gas bubble than was first expected, it is quite possible that there might be. That is the opinion of one or two persons in my department. My department's view in respect of the inventory situation of natural gas is substantially the same as the findings of the National Energy Board in its Reasons for the Decision regarding the northern pipeline.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

REQUEST FOR REPORT ON PENSIONS STUDY

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt—Saanchi): Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of questions relating to pension studies. I should like to direct the first one to the President of the Treasury Board. In April of 1977 he announced the establishment of a study to be undertaken by Tomenson-Alexander Associates. Has that study now been completed, and when will it be tabled in the House?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the study has been completed and it is now being translated and printed. I expect to be able to make it public in the not too distant future.