

Inquiries of the Ministry

already done enough to destroy the parliamentary processes without inhibiting free discussion of this matter in this way?

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I think that is a most improper suggestion by the Acting Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

ENERGY

UNITED STATES POSITION RESPECTING CONTINENTAL POLICY—INCREASED U.S. IMPORTS OF VENEZUELAN OIL

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in the not unusual absence of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources may I direct a question to the acting minister. More than a week ago I asked the minister a question regarding a letter which was sent to 25 United States senators from the office of the President of the United States. The relevant sentence in that letter which I asked him about was the following:

The national security of the United States requires the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement with Canada with respect to all energy matters and the imposition of some quantitative limitations on the entry of Canadian petroleum pending the conclusion of such a pact.

The minister undertook to ascertain from the United States government whether or not the statement in this letter represented American policy. Can the acting minister now tell the House whether or not he has received a reply from the United States, and what is the nature of that reply?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Acting Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I believe that at this point in time a reply has not been received but I would like to check that more accurately.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Has the Canadian government been informed or has it made any inquiries regarding the announcement yesterday by the government of the United States that they are increasing their importation of Venezuelan oil at a time when they are curtailing importation of Canadian oil? Also, can the acting minister tell the House, first of all, what is the size of these increases in imports of Venezuelan oil and whether or not this action is related to the American attempt to influence Canadians into accepting the continental energy policy referred to in the letter from the President's office?

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, as far as I know the size of the change in regard to Venezuela was not announced, and of course I certainly would not comment on the motivation behind the increase as part of the over-all policy changes going on in the United States.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Has the minister had his attention drawn to the statement of the Chairman of the Federal Power Commission in Washington last Wednesday in which he said that the United States is especially short of natural gas and electricity and the Nixon administration is using the carrot of a bigger market for Canadian crude oil to gain more Canadian natural gas and electricity? Also, is the department making any inquiries whether or not the Chairman was stating American policy as was indicated by the letter from President Nixon's office to which I have already referred?

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I would not read that as a statement of policy at all. Of course we have been aware for some time of the importance to the United States of various kinds of energy available in Canada, particularly natural gas, and have tried to be as aware of its value to the United States as possible in the course of our negotiations and discussions with them.

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister whether the Canadian government was either consulted or notified of this announcement?

Mr. Lang: I would want to check that, Mr. Speaker.

BUILDING OF PIPELINE FROM WESTERN CANADA TO EASTERN MARKET

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the acting minister this question. In view of the important and deleterious effect of the United States announcement yesterday regarding Venezuelan oil on the shipment of western Canadian oil, would the government give new consideration to making public any studies which have been prepared either by the department or by private sources of the advantages or disadvantages of building a pipeline to Montreal so that the Quebec market could be supplied with western oil?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Acting Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I shall bring that representation to the