

Business of the House

at the present time with the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Alberta concerning additional projects in that regard. There is no shortage of financing for good projects at the present time, and these discussions are going on.

If there are Japanese interested in the development of the Canadian tar sands, obviously the Government would be ready and willing to sit down with them and talk. However, we have to bear in mind our first priority, which is Canadian self-sufficiency, and we are not going to approve long-term commitments of exports of oil to other countries without first making sure that Canadians are going to be protected. We have to bear in mind that our first priority is Canadian self-sufficiency. We will not approve long-term commitments for exports of oil to other countries without first making sure that Canadians will be protected.

● (1500)

SUGGESTED OFFER OF SECURITY OF SUPPLY TO JAPAN

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Mr. Speaker, the Minister is confusing me. First of all, he said that we are self-sufficient, and then he said that we are not self-sufficient. We do not really know. However, because he has said that we are self-sufficient, will he make an arrangement with the Japanese to give them some security of supply in consideration for their immediately opening up a tar sand plant that will provide jobs in Ontario, Alberta and the rest of the country? Canada has 1.5 million people out of work. When will the Government start using the energy potential of the country to put people back to work?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I again invite my hon. friend to look a little bit further than his nose. We were self-sufficient last year, and we want to ensure that we will be self-sufficient in oil in the future. Therefore, we will take steps to ensure that Canada will be well protected in the future in terms of oil supply.

As far as his question with respect to supposed Japanese interest is concerned, I have already answered it.

* * *

PETITIONS

TABLING OF REPORTS OF CLERK OF PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the petitions presented by Hon. Members on Tuesday, May 22, 1984, meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of House business. Perhaps the Government House Leader might be able to advise the House whether or not the Government will

be able to fulfil its commitment of last Friday and tell the House whether the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources will in fact be appearing before the committee.

Mr. Speaker: Questions relating to House business are permitted on Thursday. The Hon. Member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton is aware of the usual practice of the House.

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, I understand that that is the usual practice of the House in order to get a weekly schedule. However, supplementary questions are frequently asked during the week, and this is a committee—

Mr. Speaker: Is the Hon. Member for Saskatoon West rising?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, the point of order that I would like to raise at this time is that if committees are not able to function, that is a matter of order within the House and it would come under the jurisdiction of the House. A commitment was made by the Acting Prime Minister acknowledging that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources should, in fact, appear before committee on his estimates. The Acting Prime Minister said that he would report back to the House in order that the committee could function. I think my hon. colleague who asked the question wanted to know whether or not there has been any report back with respect to the matter. I believe it is a matter of order for the House as it relates to the functioning of committees.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to draw to the attention of the Hon. Member that his point would have been a perfectly proper question to ask the Minister during Question Period. The practice has been to entertain questions relating to House business on Thursdays. I think the Hon. Member for Saskatoon West and the Hon. Member for Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton can restrain themselves until tomorrow. At that time, the usual questions relating to—

Mr. Dick: No, that is when the committee meets.

Mr. Speaker: Committees must resolve their problems regarding witnesses, who appears and who does not appear. It is not the practice of the House of Commons to order or instruct witnesses. That is a matter for the committee to resolve.

Mr. Dick: With the greatest respect, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that Question Period will not be until two o'clock and the committee—if it is going to meet with the Minister—will be meeting before that time.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member is well aware that it is not the normal business to settle procedures before committees on the floor of the House of Commons. These are matters for the committees to resolve. Questions relating to the business of the House are entertained regularly on Thursdays. That is the practice of the House.