

Oil and Gas

Mr. Stanfield: Is this based on consultation?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Such a program would be employed up to the point at which the supply of oil fell 25 per cent below demand. Only then would it be necessary to institute a formal rationing program. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) has said that basically this is unconstitutional.

Mr. Stanfield: I did not, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for interrupting the minister. I asked if that is based on consultation.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Oh, I see. I would point out to the Leader of the Opposition, who has had his mouth open through most of my speech rather than his ears, that we are talking about a program which we do not expect will come into existence but which has been a matter of discussion with, among others, the Alberta Energy Conservation Board.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I would think that, unlike the Leader of the Opposition—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Is the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) rising on a point of order?

Mr. Stanfield: No, Mr. Speaker, not on a point of order but just to ask if the minister would permit a question.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I will be glad to have a question, but first I will complete my remarks. Before the interruption I was pointing out that such a program would be implemented up to the point at which the supply of oil fell 25 per cent below demand. Only then would it be necessary to institute a formal rationing program.

Within the federal government a special committee has been formed, representative of the relevant departments, for the purpose of planning and effecting such measures if they should be required, and the assistance of the industry has been enlisted through the technical liaison committee. All I can say, again, is that there have not been these interruptions yet, but if the Arab states continue to go forward with their intentions there will be at least some diversion of oil supplies from the Canadian market. On this basis, through the acquisition of supplies, is necessary for government account—and by saying so I do not absolve the industry from taking special measures to acquire supplies—and through transfers from western Canada, either through the Seaway or by tank trucks and tank cars to eastern Canada, and by efforts to restrict demand on unessential services, we would seek to provide for the contingency which we all anticipate this winter. In conclusion, we hope we will have the co-operation of hon. gentlemen on all sides of the House should this become necessary.

Mr. Stanfield: Would the minister indicate what kind of consultative machinery has been established with regard to the hypothetical compulsory rationing system which will only come into effect if it is really necessary, not only with the Alberta people but with the people who may be affected by the rationing? What consultative machinery

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

has been set up, and has the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) been included in this—because at least he may be able to turn out the lights in his own office building even if he cannot do anything with regard to the Arab states?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): As I indicated in my remarks, which the hon. gentleman heard, we have already discussed these programs with the minister of energy for the province of Ontario and he has indicated the wish of his government to give support. We have discussed the matter with a number of provincial premiers, and I anticipate I will be meeting the Premier of New Brunswick during the current week and anticipate the possibility of meeting all five eastern premiers at a convenient date in the immediate future.

With regard to further supplies of oil for the eastern Canadian market, as I said, representatives of the Alberta board are participating in this particular committee. So that indeed there have been extensive consultations, and we would hope to have the co-operation of all provinces in putting the programs into effect.

Mr. Coates: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Chair finds itself in some difficulty. I gave the minister extra time because his speech did provoke numerous sallies, particularly between the front benches, which I thought were in the nature of interruptions. The minister has gone over his time, but if it is the wish of the House that members ask questions, I will recognize the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North (Mr. Coates), the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), the hon. member for Scarborough East (Mr. Stackhouse), and the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River (Mr. Oberle) on questions.

● (2120)

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is not agreed.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, perhaps you could ask again whether the House would permit questions. If I understood correctly, you said it was not agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Somebody on my right said no.

An hon. Member: John Reid said no.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if you would put the question again. I would be delighted to have questions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North (Mr. Coates).

Mr. Coates: Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak, not to ask a question of the minister.