

Mr. Chrétien: I said that no information would be put into that document which would not be made public in this country. I will table that document in the House of Commons when it is appropriate to do so. I do not think it would be appropriate to do so today.

Mr. Gillies: You said you would.

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ENERGY

GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES TO NEB ON GAS RESERVES FOR CANADIAN NEEDS

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources regarding the announcement that Northwest Energy Corporation, a partner of Foothills in the construction of the northern pipeline, has just signed contracts for Alberta gas which will increase Canadian exports to the United States by 37 per cent. In view of the fact that Canada's long-term prospects for gas are not reassuring, what guidelines has the government given the National Energy Board regarding the amount of gas reserves which must be held to meet future Canadian needs, and what percentage will be declared surplus to our national requirements and allowed to be exported?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's question is somewhat premature. The application has yet to be presented to the National Energy Board for a decision and, as I am sure the hon. member is also aware, it will depend a good deal on the Alberta government and the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board assessment of the reserves position in that province as to whether gas would be available for export on a swap basis.

I have noted the interest with respect to the application to move, as the hon. member has indicated, close to a billion cubic feet of gas to the United States. I understand that that particular proposal is on the basis of a swap arrangement whereby Canadians would have a call on future gas reserves from Alaska, and to that extent this proposal is consistent with the position the government has already made public.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, as the minister has said, this could mean the export of a billion cubic feet of gas per day to the United States under some type of swap arrangement. I therefore ask the minister if what we have been told, that the Alcan gas pipeline was to take Arctic gas to the United States, is now being put in second place, and the primary purpose of this pipeline now will be to take cheap Alberta gas to the United States in order to give Canadians the "privilege" of buying expensive Arctic gas in the future.

I ask the minister if that is the understanding which has been reached between the government, Foothills and Northwest Energy Corporation. Also, will he tell the House the terms upon which such as a swap arrangement will be made?

Oral Questions

Are we to buy dear gas and sell cheap gas: is that the swap arrangement the government has in mind?

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, on the first point, quite clearly the government's interest in the Foothills (Yukon) pipeline in energy terms is to gain access to Canadian supplies at low cost. The option for Canada is that we will be able to move Canadian supplies to Canadian customers for less money than the United States will be able to move their gas to United States' customers. As to the details of the swap arrangement, I have to say that I do not believe they have got them worked out. The kind of guarantees the hon. member is seeking are very much present in our minds as well.

● (1422)

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the final arrangement would have to be approved by the cabinet, and in view of the fact that originally in the National Energy Board there was a stipulation that the government had to hold 21 years of gas in reserve, and that provision was taken out, I ask the minister if he will tell the House, in all fairness, the quantity of gas the National Energy Board will be asked to keep in Canada before declaring that any other gas is surplus to national requirements.

Surely that ought to be known. It is not a matter for the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board or any other agency. The Canadian government will have to approve any export of gas recommended by the National Energy Board, and this parliament has a right to know how much gas is to be held for the future requirements of the Canadian people.

Mr. Gillespie: As the hon. member knows, the National Energy Board is charged by parliament with this responsibility. We will be looking to the National Energy Board for advice on whether the gas that is proposed might be moved on some kind of accelerated or swap basis will in any way change the situation as far as that gas being surplus to Canadian needs is concerned. If it is on a swap basis—which I understand it is intended that gas would be—I cannot see that that would change in any way the whole question of surplus, or not surplus, to Canadian needs.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The price will change.

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[Translation]

HOUSING

INQUIRY WHETHER RRAP WILL BE INSTITUTED THROUGHOUT CANADA

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.