

Canada exchange rate, is the Canadian government contemplating, as does the United States government, early implementation of a wage freeze?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am not aware, Mr. Speaker, that the Americans have frozen wages but I am willing to inquire about the matter.

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[English]

POLLUTION

POLICY RESPECTING PIPELINE DOWN MACKENZIE RIVER VALLEY FROM ALASKA—STUDIES OF ECOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, who for some time has not been able to be in the House although he has been on the roster, I should like to direct my question to the Prime Minister. It arises from a speech the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources made in Vancouver last Thursday in which he quite properly deplored the plan for bringing oil from Alaska down to Cherry Point, Washington, in tankers and the attendant hazards this movement would entail. My question has to do with the minister's offer of the Canadian northland as a bridge for the movement of oil from Alaska down the Mackenzie River Valley. I should like to ask if this offer of the Canadian northland for this purpose is a statement of government policy?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I have not seen the reference the hon. member has in mind. I will check into it, but there is no government policy to make any precise offer, if that is what the hon. member is asking. There has been, of course, the suggestion that this course might be a cheaper and more useful way of moving oil south. There has to be, of course, attendant upon that a caution about the danger of pollution in our own territory which might result from it. There has been no formal offer of which I know.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Secretary of State for External Affairs said "we have been doing some studies on the ecological consequences of such a pipeline". I want to ask the Prime Minister or the Minister of Fisheries and Forestry whether such studies on the ecological consequences of a pipeline down the Mackenzie River Valley have been undertaken, if they have been completed and whether or not they will be made available to Members of Parliament before this question has to be decided upon?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of Fisheries and Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I can assure hon. members that studies along these lines are under way. The oil companies are also engaged in a major experiment at Inuvik with a view to designing a pipeline which will be compatible with our environment.

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, can the minister or the Prime Minister assure the House that until such studies have been made public and members of the House have had an opportunity to study the ecological effects of such a pipeline, no final decision will be made by the government in respect of giving consent for its construction?

Mr. Davis: I think we can assure the House we will not only look into the ecological consequences of a pipeline but also be communicating as effectively as possible with the public, and certainly with members of this House and with the public.

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OIL

FEASIBILITY STUDY OF CONSTRUCTION OF PIPELINE TO EASTERN CANADA IN LIGHT OF NEW OFFSHORE OIL PRICE AGREEMENT

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, my question arises out of the new agreement in respect of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. I direct it to the Prime Minister in view of the absence of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. On January 20 and on February 9 I asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Secretary of State for External Affairs about the possibility of the government initiating and promoting a feasibility study to ascertain the economics of building a pipeline from western Canada and the Arctic to supply the eastern Canadian market. In view of the OPEC agreement, would the Prime Minister and the government consider setting up a study group sponsored by the government and independent of free enterprise in view of the new economic situation which has developed as a result of this recent agreement?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I will take the question as notice on behalf of the minister.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, may I put this supplementary. In view of the fact that last week the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Secretary of State for External Affairs said that such a study would be left up to free enterprise and in view of the fact that free enterprise is capable of shipping crude petroleum from western Canada and importing it from the Near East, would the Prime Minister give serious consideration to adopting a different viewpoint and set up a clearcut study of the economic feasibility as such a pipeline would be so important to the gross national product and particularly in providing jobs for Canadians?

Mr. Trudeau: I will take the second part of the speech as notice too, Mr. Speaker.