

Oral Questions

[Translation]

TRADE

REPORT OF TEXTILE AND CLOTHING BOARD—GOVERNMENT
POSITION

Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Sherbrooke): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Seven months ago the Textile and Clothing Board presented to the government an exhaustive study on the textile industry problems in which it recommended that the quotas negotiated with several countries be extended for nine years. Considering that in the same report the board was asking and urging the minister to take immediate steps concerning the shirt industry in Canada, that no decision has been taken after seven months and that over 700 workers are without jobs, I would ask the minister whether he intends to intervene at the earliest opportunity and make public the government position about the report of the Textile and Clothing Board?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, when I tabled the report of the Textile and Clothing Board I stated that the intention of the government was to make an attempt to reply to the recommendations of the report in March. I am endeavouring to achieve that objective within the time limit specified when I tabled the report. I am fully aware of the difficulties experienced by the shirt industry and I am still looking into this problem to find out whether it is necessary to take emergency action even before announcing our general policy.

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[English]

NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

INQUIRY RESPECTING REFERENCE OF PROGRAM TO SPECIAL
JOINT COMMITTEE

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is further to the exchange yesterday between the Minister of Finance and the hon. member for Calgary Centre on the question of referring the National Energy Program to a special joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons. My question is addressed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Since the National Energy Program acknowledges almost a total revolution in energy development in this country, I am sure the minister is encountering a great degree of uncertainty among consumers, industry and provinces as to the impact of this program.

Since the National Energy Program is the subject of at least five separate pieces of legislation, will the minister add his support to the fairly positive response of the Minister of Finance in allowing this program to be considered by a special committee of the Senate and House of Commons?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the way I read it in *Hansard*, it seems to me that the Minister of Finance rejected that suggestion yesterday.

[English]

Mr. Wilson: Madam Speaker, I read *Hansard* too and I felt there was a generally positive response to the proposal put forward by my hon. friend. The minister has acknowledged that the National Energy Program will totally change energy development in this country. Changes of this magnitude usually result in a great degree of disruption for different elements of the economy and society. The risks to our security of supply, our balance of payments, the economic development of the country and the total fibre of the country are stretched to very great limits. Surely the people of Canada must be able to assess this risk. There are major disagreements as to the impact, so would the minister explain why it is not in the general interest of a clearer understanding of the National Energy Program to have a discussion and consideration of this total program in one place, in one forum, not spread among five different forums as a result of the different pieces of legislation?

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, there is one forum where this matter is considered, and that is called Parliament. The matter has been debated extensively in this House. The National Energy Program has been debated extensively in this House during the budget debate, six consecutive days when the pricing issue was debated, as well as during the consideration of the oil and gas act, the Income Tax Act amendments which are before the House at the present time, and before the parliamentary committee where Bill C-48 is being considered. There has been no shortage of places or avenues for debate and discussion of this subject and the hearing of witnesses. In addition, the National Energy Program has been the subject of discussion and debate in the media and before provincial and federal boards. So there has been ample opportunity for the expression of views on this particular subject. I fail to see what the suggestion of my hon. friend would achieve in advancing the debate any further.

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HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

UREA FORMALDEHYDE FOAM INSULATION—NOTIFICATION OF
POTENTIAL HEALTH HAZARD

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Madam Speaker, my question today is for the minister responsible for CMHC and it pertains to some remarks made last week in the House by the Minister of National Health and Welfare concerning people who have experienced difficulties as a result of the installation of UF foam. She said at that time they could contact their physicians, her office or the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources if they were experiencing difficulties. A constituent at that time telephoned me to indicate