

FRENCH EXPLORATION IN DISPUTED ZONE—ROLE OF
PRESIDENT OF FRANCE

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Leader of the Opposition): I thank the minister for that assurance of assistance.

I should like to ask a somewhat related question, and that is whether President Mitterrand alerted the Government of Canada to the possibility of France's undertaking exploration in the disputed zone.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, I have no reason to believe that that was the case.

Senator MacEachen: The minister said that he has no reason to believe that that was the case, which is not a complete answer to the question. I should like to have it confirmed with a "yes" or "no" whether the President of France came to Canada, had discussions on this sensitive question of boundaries with the Government of Canada, and did not tell the Government of Canada that his government was proposing quick action in asserting its jurisdiction in the disputed zone.

It is obvious that a decision to explore is an assertion of jurisdiction, and anticipates the negotiations that were to take place to determine the boundary.

Perhaps the minister does not have the answer today, but I should like to have some information on that point, because I think it says something about the frankness of the exchanges between the two governments, if President Mitterrand did not convey the intention of the Government of France with respect to exploration in the disputed zone.

REQUEST FOR ANSWERS

Hon. H.A. Olson: Honourable senators, the Leader of the Government in the Senate said yesterday that he would bring some information to the Senate today respecting the 70 per cent of the \$1 billion that was to be paid in deficiency payments to western grain farmers and that has not been paid.

He also indicated that he was going to bring to the Senate information respecting whether or not Canada was successful in making representations to the Government of the United States, dealing with the regulatory order made by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission prohibiting sellers and transporters of Canadian natural gas from adding on transportation costs, so that there could be a flow through of those costs to the utilities and the consumers. He said that he would give the Senate information on that today.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, with regard to the first part of the question, I am informed by the Minister of Agriculture that the cheques are or will be in the mail this afternoon.

Regarding the second question, I have no further information on the FERC decision, but I do hope to have something tomorrow.

DELAYED ANSWERS TO ORAL QUESTIONS
THE CONSTITUTION

FIRST MINISTERS' ACCORD—INTERPRETATION OF TEXT RE
AGENDA FOR FIRST MINISTERS' CONFERENCES

Hon. Orville H. Phillips: Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer in response to a question asked in the Senate on May 28 last by the Honourable Senator John B. Stewart regarding The Constitution—First Ministers' Accord—Interpretation of Text Re Agenda for First Ministers' Conferences.

(The answer follows:)

Clause 13 of the Schedule found in the Constitutional Accord signed on June 3 by First Ministers clearly states that the annual constitutional conferences "shall have included on their agenda" the matters referred to in the Honourable Senator's question. This agenda is thus mandatory for the first and subsequent conferences.

Understandably, First Ministers could agree to repeal this obligation, for example, once Senate reform had been achieved.

FIRST MINISTERS' ACCORD—TERMINOLOGY OF TEXT—DANGER
OF CLASSIFYING FRENCH-CANADIANS UNDER TWO
CATEGORIES

Hon. Orville H. Phillips: Honourable senators, I have a delayed answer in response to a question asked in the Senate on May 28 last by the Honourable Senator Pierre De Bané regarding The Constitution—First Ministers' Accord—Terminology of Text—Danger of Classifying French Canadians Under Two Categories.

(The answer follows:)

The proposed amendments, which are appended to the constitutional accord signed by First Ministers on June 3, recognize the existence of "French-speaking Canadians, centred in Quebec but also present elsewhere in Canada . . ."

This recognition will not create, as suggested by the Honourable Senator, two groups of French-speaking Canadians. Rather, it makes clear that the existence of French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians, no matter where they live, is a fundamental characteristic of Canada.

As for the use of the words "promote" and "preserve", it should be noted that Parliament and provincial legislatures will not in any way be limited in efforts to promote the fundamental characteristic of Canada described in the constitutional text. It represents, for the first time in Canadian history, a common commitment of governments to the linguistic duality of Canada. Parliament has played and will continue to play a major role in promoting respect and understanding in this area.