

*Oral Questions*

over of the Canadian assets of the Atlantic Richfield Corporation of the United States by Petro-Canada. In view of the fact that the main reason for the delay in signing the Syncrude agreement arose from the difficulty of acquiring Atlantic Richfield's permits and leases in the Athabasca oil sands, will the acquisition of Atlantic Richfield's Canadian assets, resolve the difficulties with respect to the Syncrude consortium, and in the event that this proposed takeover is completed, how soon after that does the minister envisage the signing of the Syncrude agreement?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of different questions there. Let me try to deal with each of them.

The first point I wish to make is that the question of the leases and the possible take over by Petro-Canada of ARCAN are unrelated events. The second point has to do with the Syncrude agreement itself and when it might be signed. That is going to depend very much on what we are able to negotiate with the province of Alberta. At the present time we have not been able to reach an agreement on a reasonable rate of return on the pipelines and utilities. We have proposed that we should put this issue out to arbitration. I believe the province of Ontario and the private sector companies would support that particular approach, but that is the log jam at the present time.

I must also say that we have not yet concluded, although I am hopeful we will reach, an agreement on the outstanding leases.

POSSIBILITY PETRO-CANADA WILL NEED ADDITIONAL CAPITAL TO FINANCE TAKEOVER OF ATLANTIC RICHFIELD

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** In view of the fact that only some \$10 million has been allocated for Petro-Canada in this fiscal year, in the event that Petro-Canada does acquire the Canadian assets of Atlantic Richfield, what amount of money is going to be made available to the national petroleum corporation for working capital in addition to the purchase price which at the present time is being thought of in terms of some \$400 million? Will additional funds be made available to Petro-Canada so that it can operate this company in the event that the purchase is negotiated?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Petro-Canada has retained consultants to advise it on the reasonable value of assets of ARCAN. The major part of these assets are oil and natural gas producing assets. It is by no means certain that ARCAN and Petro-Canada will arrive at a mutually agreed figure for the take-over of those assets. If they do, the financing plan by Petro-Canada for the take-over will have to be submitted to the government. It is possible that a large proportion of those assets will be financed without government assistance.

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

● (1450)

## ELECTIONS

## REASON FOR DELAY IN CALLING BY-ELECTION IN ST. JOHN'S WEST

**Mr. Paul Dick (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister? In view of the Prime Minister's comments at the end of the year about the need for changes in society, will he assure the House and the Canadian people that he and the government still feel that one of the fundamental rights in our democratic society is this: that a properly accredited electorate in any constituency in Canada is entitled to representation by elected officials in the House of Commons?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Dick:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Why is it that after Gérard Pelletier, the cabinet minister, resigned to become ambassador in Paris the Prime Minister called a by-election within 60 days, whereas in the case of the vacancy in St. John's West the by-election was not called until the last moment, thus depriving the people of that area representation in the House of Commons for over one year? Will the Prime Minister not announce an earlier date for the by-election?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

\* \* \*

## ENERGY

## BURIAL OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL AT EAST BRAINTREE, MANITOBA—REASON FOR CHOICE OF SITE

**Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources? Some days ago I asked the minister for information concerning the burial site of radioactive material at East Braintree, Manitoba. The burial site was completed under the auspices of the Department of National Health and Welfare and the Manitoba Cancer Research Foundation, without the express knowledge of the Atomic Energy Control Board. Has the minister been able to check further? Has he information other than that he sent me in letter form? Will those people who, without permission from the Atomic Energy Control Board, chose the site be questioned on why the site was chosen and why the regulations of the AECB were not followed in the choice of the site?

**Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I believe satisfactory discussions have taken place between AECB and the provincial government agencies involved.

**Mr. Epp:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. With respect, although those discussions might be acceptable to the two bodies concerned, the people of my riding are also deeply concerned. I ask the minister, again, will he make a statement on motions or some other occasion informing the