

*Energy*

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement on motions and then at the end of it, pursuant to Standing Order 41(2), lay on the table of the House two documents, "An Energy Policy for Canada, Phase I." volume I is an analysis, and Volume II is appendices. These are in relation to a review of energy policies in Canada. This is a comprehensive review of the five principal commodities which are used to create energy in Canada. I think I am correct in saying that this is the first time there has been an attempt to consider all five commodities in one study as a prelude for policy decisions.

The document is lengthy and speaks for itself. The appropriate statement to be made at this time on motions is really, I think, what will be the procedure and where will we go in terms of further discussions on policy? Clearly, in relation to many of the policies action will have to be taken by way of consultation with the provincial governments, many of which have under our constitution legislative jurisdiction with regard to parts of these policies. We also feel that it should be possible and appropriate to take action by way of consulting interested members of the general public on a question which in recent years has been one of the most lively to be discussed in political affairs in Canada.

There are a number of questions which will require provincial consultation. One concerns the discussions that have been taking place recently with regard to the price of natural gas in Canada. I think it might be helpful to look at this as not just a simple discussion of the gas price but also a discussion with regard to the oil market, the continuation or change of the national oil policy, to discuss the question of economic rent which is referred to at some length in these documents, and also what, if any, kind of incentives should be made available to the petroleum industry in Canada to make certain that the potential that we have in the frontier areas with regard to oil and natural gas will in fact be defined by exploration and ultimately be made available by way of transportation systems.

In the discussions between the federal government and the provinces there are conflicting interests. Natural gas is the most obvious case, where the producer province has an ambition to get the best possible price for the product, and consumer provinces are concerned about what for their consumers and industries will be an increase in the cost of energy. This is the kind of question, therefore, that cannot be settled in any other way than by close consultation and discussion between federal and provincial governments and it will be a priority for future action.

I am expecting, in effect, to consult provincial governments across the country but particularly those in western Canada which are very much concerned about this question. The governments of Ontario and Quebec are also actively concerned in natural gas questions. There will be discussions with all governments on these various energy issues to let them put their viewpoints forward with regard to the studies. Also, we do not pretend that these are not questions of opinion upon which reasonable men could differ. The important thing is to try to get the broadest possible input of fact and opinion as to what

energy resources we have, what our needs are, and then to evolve policy changes.

Visits to various provincial capitals will be for the purpose of getting their first reactions and, secondly, to consult with the provincial governments as to the manner in which they would like to continue discussions, whether in talks at a federal-provincial conference, as suggested by Premier Davis, or in specific discussions with regard to individual commodities.

To indicate the area for action by this government and this parliament, I shall be seeking from my colleagues the opportunity to give early precedence in the next session of parliament to putting through a bill which we have been discussing for a number of years with regard to a uranium policy for Canada. Equally, it would be helpful—and I will be consulting the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) on this—to have the subject matter of these documents made the subject of a specific reference to the standing committee of the House of Commons. There has been useful discussion on the annual report of the department, but it seems to me this document might provide a broader basis for discussion and I think we should have a further discussion in committee. Of course, the committee would be at liberty to call interested persons and to comment further on it.

When talking about energy policies in Canada we are really talking not so much about a single philosopher's stone that is going to solve all questions but, rather, an aggregate of policies. This is not only with regard to the five commodities but policies with regard to evolving needs within our country. There is, therefore, going to be a problem from time to time in bringing into effect some parts of the policy when other parts are not decided. In effect, we shall try to deal with it in terms of the order of priorities not only as time may present the problems but as co-operative decisions can be reached with respect to various aspects of these documents.

Without further ado, Mr. Speaker, I should like to lay on the table copies, in both official languages, of "An Energy Policy for Canada, Phase I" in two volumes.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Jim Balfour (Regina East):** Mr. Speaker, at the outset let me tell the minister that the report being tabled tonight falls far short of our expectations and of the expectations of the people of Canada. As a collection of data and as a research analysis, this report appears at first-hand to have identified most of the energy issues confronting the Canadian nation. The questions are raised. But where are the answers? After all, policy proposals are solutions to questions. This House and the country had every right and reason, based on the minister's statements both inside and outside this House, to expect that instead of once more raising questions and issues, leadership and direction would have been forthcoming.

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It is difficult, therefore, to understand why the minister has undertaken what appears to be an overzealous public relations campaign through which to transmit the findings of his report. In a way, the minister is really only trying to