

decision has been taken, as I have indicated quite clearly. A recommendation by the Energy Board has already been rejected. The matter is presently before cabinet, and when a decision is made it will be announced. No decision has yet been made one way or the other.

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AIR SAFETY

DUBIN INQUIRY—TESTIMONY OF MOT OFFICIALS

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Madam Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Transport. Following testimony by a Ministry of Transport aviation inspector before the judicial inquiry in Quebec City, Mr. Justice Dubin warned a senior Transport Canada official that he will not tolerate intimidation of witnesses appearing before his commission of inquiry into aviation safety. He also said he would do everything in his power to ensure that no witness appearing before his commission would be harassed or unfairly dealt with.

Will the minister assure us that he, too, will not tolerate harassment or intimidation of employees of his department by any of his officials, and that no effort to tamper with or influence testimony of employees who are to appear as witnesses will be allowed; and will he send a warning in writing to his deputy minister, assistant deputy ministers and all other officials and supervisors in his department to that effect?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that the same judge, the Chief commissioner of the commission, should have found it useful yesterday, to compliment the officials in the air administration branch of my department for their openness, frankness and objectivity in this situation.

The air administrator of my department has repeatedly said, in private and in public, that officials of the department were free to come and give evidence before the commission. He said openly that there would be no penalty attached to such action. I wish to say emphatically—and this is as good as a letter—that it is also my attitude and I will see to it that it is implemented in the future as in the past.

● (1450)

Mr. Benjamin: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the minister's assurances in that regard. In the present context, with regard to the future treatment of these employees, to make sure that there is no possibility that those employees who appear as witnesses will be unfairly or improperly treated later by supervisors or officials for giving evidence to the inquiry which they might not like, will the minister issue a directive to all officials in his department that there is to be no unfair treatment or lack of consideration given to any employee, no lessening of their opportunities for advancement or promotion, no derogatory insertions in their personnel files, no refusing to speak to or to deal openly and normally at all times with such employees?

Oral Questions

Mr. Pepin: My hon. friend is sufficiently sophisticated to know that a statement of that kind might not solve all the problems. There are ways of being unfriendly to a person when you want to be that, as my friend can well imagine. But speaking from the top of my head—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Pepin:—and with great sincerity, I might offer to do something even more worthwhile than what the hon. member suggested. I might promise to the House—because what is taking place now is, in my view, a very serious event which might have a traumatic effect on the department—to pay particular attention to the officers who are going to present testimony which might not be friendly to the department, and I promise to meet them and to ensure that they are not hurt in the process.

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ENERGY

PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO ALBERTA ON OIL PRICING AGREEMENT—TAR SANDS DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In reply to a number of questions from this side of the House, the minister indicated that to gain an oil pricing agreement with Alberta he had submitted four proposals to Alberta.

My question is whether they were really four distinctly different proposals, or did the minister submit four times the same proposal? If they were indeed distinct, which I doubt, I should like to ask the minister, what were the differences?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): First of all, I would like to assure my hon. colleague that at least four different proposals were made during the discussions I had with my counterpart from Alberta. These various proposals were all rejected for different reasons. However, I wish to add that the Alberta energy minister and myself have agreed that for the benefit of the negotiations which are in progress, it would be preferable not to give out the details of the offers made.

[English]

Mr. Shields: Madam Speaker, in a supplementary question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources I should like to ask whether he has considered the fact that he might be able to settle the tar sands, or the heavy oil portion of the agreement to allow these two massive developments to get under way.

He did indicate that Petro-Canada is ready to go and that these companies are ready to go. Indeed, Alsands is not ready to go without a commitment on pricing, Imperial Oil is not ready to go without a commitment on pricing, PetroCan is not