

have not been able to qualify under the present regulations?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): I would be glad to give very serious consideration to the question of whether I can put together figures along the lines suggested by the hon. member in order to make a statement on motions.

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OIL

FEASIBILITY OF CONSTRUCTING PIPELINE FROM WESTERN CANADA TO MONTREAL—COMMITMENT TO UNITED STATES RESPECTING SECURITY

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It arises out of the report that there is likely to be an increase of at least two cents a gallon in gasoline prices east of the Ottawa valley. In view of the fact that the reason given for this proposed increase is the rise in price of offshore oil, may I ask the minister whether this price increase now makes it more feasible from the minister's point of view to consider the extension of the pipeline east to Montreal?

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): We are not yet certain what offshore oil prices will be subsequent to the negotiations between the producer countries and the oil companies which are now under way. We do know that tanker prices have gone up very considerably in the current year and this, of course, lends itself to higher prices for offshore oil. But from the standpoint of the economic feasibility of extending the pipeline there is no certainty that oil prices will be such as to render such a project economic. If it is economic, I feel sure that the private sector will consider the construction of such a pipeline, and the government would certainly consider seriously any suggestion that a pipeline would be economic once offshore prices are determined.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In view of the statement made by President Richard Nixon that Canada will have to satisfy United States security arrangements under its mandatory oil import program before the United States will be prepared to grant free access of Canadian oil to the United States market, has the Canadian government made any commitment as to the way in which this security is to be provided, and is the extension of the pipeline to eastern Canada part of this program for guaranteeing security as requested by the President of the United States?

Mr. Greene: We have made no commitments with regard to a pipeline or security. This is one of the concerns of the United States in connection with opening up the oil market to our western oil, and they pay a very heavy price for this security. But the Canadian position has been and will and, I think, should continue to be that question of security affecting Canada should be Canadian decisions. What the United States deems to be security and what Canada deems to be security might well be two

Inquiries of the Ministry

different things, and our constant representation to the United States has been that we shall make the decision in Canada as to what we deem to be security for Canadian sources of supply. We feel sure that decision will meet with the approval of the United States, as it will be a Canadian decision made in the Canadian interests and should satisfy the Americans, but it will not be made by the Americans for Canada.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Since the decision as to what is in the best interests of security for Canada ought to be determined by parliament, will the minister reconsider his decision not to make available all the data to the appropriate committee of the House so that members may have an opportunity to examine the feasibility study which has been undertaken and determine whether or not an extension of the pipeline would be feasible in Canada's interests?

Mr. Greene: Mr. Speaker, I think I said previously that the government and several of its departments have the question of the cost of a pipeline and its feasibility under continuing review. But we have maintained throughout that in keeping with the practice in Canada, which I think has been a highly successful one that has brought prosperity to the oil and gas industries and has contributed to the well-being of Canada as a whole, the decision as to construction of pipelines or no will be made by the private sector. All pipelines in Canada are owned by the private sector, not the public sector. Therefore we do not really have a comprehensive survey as such, as to the economic feasibility and viability, of such a pipeline—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister. The minister set out some economic facts and partly answered the question a few moments ago, but I should like to know whether there is any study now being made under the sponsorship of the government regarding the economic feasibility of a pipeline to the Montreal market from western Canada? Is this just a matter of guesswork or is there any study being made so that the minister can provide some economic facts?

Mr. Greene: Mr. Speaker, there is no complete, comprehensive study as such. Under the law in Canada, anybody who wished to build a pipeline would make a presentation to the National Energy Board who, with the knowledge and information they have of a continuing character, would determine the feasibility of such pipeline and would then make a recommendation to the government. It is in this way that such a decision would be made under existing Canadian law.

Mr. Woolliams: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I hope Your Honour does not regard this question as argumentative because I am seeking knowledge from the minister. How, then, can the minister set out the economic facts as to the feasibility of such a pipeline if there is no study on which to base those facts?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think I would have to regard that question as at least slightly argumentative.