

required in order to supply a cash flow to the oil companies, and they have not used the very large cash flow they have for exploration, in fact exploration has declined, surely the government has some program in mind to ensure that any increase in price does result in increased exploration for oil in this country.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, not only do we have some program in mind, but many steps have already been taken. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, over television the day before yesterday and at the press conference yesterday, indicated some \$2 billion had been committed by the federal government since January 1974 to ensure further exploration and development of energy in Canada.

OIL—CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MIGHT SET PRICE

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Understandably, he would like to see a general agreement among all the provinces and his own government with regard to the price of oil and natural gas. However, when the Prime Minister contemplates fixing a price unilaterally by the federal government in the absence of an accord, is he thinking in terms of an accord with all provinces, including the consuming provinces, or is he thinking in terms of the necessity of an agreement between the federal government and the producing provinces to avoid the government of Canada having to set a price unilaterally?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, at this stage I still hope that, like last year, we will be able to reach an agreement between all provinces, the consuming as well as the producing. If that does not happen, we are in the area of a hypothetical question and I do not know how to answer at this time.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to be argumentative with the Prime Minister. However, it is important that the House know the policy of the government and whether a price would be set unilaterally, according to the policy of the government. If an agreement could be reached between the government of Canada and the producing provinces, would that obviate the necessity of the government fixing a price or prices unilaterally?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I understand the concern of the Leader of the Opposition, but I wish him to understand that it is the government's preference that there be no unilateral action. If I were to indicate what course I would adopt in the absence of an agreement, surely the provinces would lose their incentive toward an agreement. I would very much prefer all provinces, both consuming and producing, to work toward that agreement and not give them the excuse of saying that the federal government has already decided to act unilaterally.

Oral Questions

● (1150)

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

INQUIRY WHEN YUKON AND NORTHWEST TERRITORIES WILL BE REPRESENTED BY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

**Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister. Since all other Canadians were represented at these talks on the pricing of oil by their elected representatives, and since his minister of northern affairs, in response yesterday to a question of mine, indicated that in the case of the Yukon and Northwest Territories this representation was the responsibility of the federal government, was the Prime Minister, in stating his views on the pricing of oil at this conference, purporting to express the views of the citizens of the Yukon and Northwest Territories? If not, when is provision going to be made for the people of those two territories to have a voice in conferences such as this through their elected representatives?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I would have to check the arrangements that were made, but the instructions that I gave were that we follow the usual practice, and that is that as members of the federal delegation there be some representatives from the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

\* \* \*

AGRICULTURE

POTATOES—POSSIBILITY OF EXTENSION OF SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR EASTERN PRODUCERS TO WESTERN PRODUCERS

**Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Has his department received submissions and, in effect, made any decision to extend the potato stabilization program that was applied to eastern Canada and the maritimes to Manitoba and other areas of western Canada, or is he introducing a new program for western Canada to alleviate the problems that the producers of potatoes are having in western Canada?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, we have received representations from Manitoba and from Alberta concerning the problem they are confronted with, and we are considering these representations at the present time. Although they have some problems in those provinces, they are not nearly as large as those in the maritimes, Quebec and Ontario.

**Mr. Murta:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the minister's answer, which seems to indicate that there will not be any assistance for the producers of western Canada, if I read what he has said correctly, how can the government or his department justify coming out with a stabilization program for one part of the country that is affected by the problem and not applying the program equally across the country to assist other affected producers in much the same manner?