

Energy Supplies

government's regulatory body, Imperial Oil Limited informed the National Energy Board and this minister's senior allocation officials of what was going on, why it was going on, and what Imperial intended to do to make up for those diversions. The minister now says that he himself was not informed of these diversions. Under the rules of this House we have to take the minister's word, and I do, but it seems awfully strange to me that the minister can now claim to us that on the basis of many telexes, wires, telegrams and communications flowing back and forth from the National Energy Board to the industry, from the industry to the National Energy Board, and from the minister's department to the industry about these cutbacks—the minister is shaking his head.

I have one right here. I can read to him parts of the telex, for instance, from Mr. Priddle of his department early in January informing the industry of the dangers of the Iranian situation and that the department wanted to be brought up to date on what alternative sources of supply were available. I could read the telex from the National Energy Board dated January 14 urging industry people to come forward quickly with a long series of swap arrangements which were obviously going to have to be made to make up for these cutbacks.

I could read these communications. They are available.

Mr. Gillespie: Go ahead.

Mr. Lawrence: Here is one from Mr. Priddle of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources:

January 4th telex from Paris indicates Iranian production fell in November to 3.1 million barrels per day and in December to 2.5 million barrels per day.

This production shortfall has been compensated for by other producing countries and delaying of stockbuilds by industry.

Further on he talks about other dangers with regard to Persian Gulf producers. Then later he says:

—complete loss of Iranian production in the first quarter would result in a shortage close to 7 per cent of first quarter demand.

If and when such a point is reached, participating countries may need to reduce demand or use emergency stocks.

Mr. Gillespie: If you read from a document, you have to table it.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Just ministers, Alastair.

Mr. Lawrence: I have another fairly long one. I will not take up more of the time of the House, but it is signed by Mr. R. Priddle, of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. It is a warning to the industry of what was going on and what would have to happen as a result of the Iranian cutback. This is a serious situation. As I say, Exxon had already informed Imperial of this cutback.

I think it is inconceivable that the minister was not kept up to date by his officials, and I say in all frankness and bluntness that I believe the minister was informed by his departmental officials and by the agencies he frequently directed with regard to policy matters at that very time about the necessity of quickly approving swap arrangements. However, he says in this House that he was not informed, and if he says in this

House that he was not informed, we have to accept that, and I do, but I say that it seems very strange to me.

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. The hon. member cannot have it both ways. He cannot, on the one hand, say he accepts my word, and then go on in a very devious way to suggest that he does not. He ought to be honest with the House, with me, and with himself. He ought to make it quite clear that he accepts the position which I put forward. He should avoid trying to confuse the situation, which he has done. I am asking him—

Mr. Paproski: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr. Blais: The minister is speaking about a question of privilege. Sit down.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I do not think a point of order has priority over a question of privilege. I am trying to listen to the minister. There are too many people who think they should be in my place.

I must say that I do not agree with the point made by the minister. I want to say to the minister that the rules of the House forbid a member from accusing another member of lying, of being a liar, or bringing falsehoods to the House. On the other hand, a member is not forced to agree with another member. There are words, however, which cannot be used in the House.

Mr. Paproski: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When Your Honour rises, the microphone lights in front of hon. members should, in deference, go off, but not until Your Honour is up out of the chair. Only then should those microphone lights go off. However, I noticed today that the microphone light in front of the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) went off before Your Honour rose. His light went off, yet the minister's light went on. I find that very hard to understand, and I wish that those who operate the switches would please take notice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am prepared to look into the matter. The point raised by the hon. member for Edmonton Centre (Mr. Paproski) is surely valid. I do not generally watch to see whether lights are on. I cannot do that easily, but I am sure the message has been heard by those responsible for the operation of the console. I am sure they do their best in any event.

Mr. Lawrence: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the fair and impartial manner in which you have always conducted the proceedings of this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lawrence: On January 8 of this year, especially for the purpose of forewarning the government, this minister and the minister's regulatory body, Imperial Oil Limited informed the National Energy Board and the minister's senior allocation official of just what it was that it was doing, and why replacement stocks were needed to take the place of the crude