

Oral Questions

are and when he is going to tell the remaining partners of Alsands who they are, because the partners do not know? Could he tell the House when this project is going to commence? When will construction start?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, what I said in the House yesterday was that there were other potential partners with whom I had discussions and with whom the partners of Alsands had discussions. Two days ago I had a meeting with officials of Shell Canada in Toronto and they indicated to me that they had approached some potential partners themselves. I do not think it would be appropriate to reveal any particular names of companies in that case. The initiative lies with the consortium. These are confidential, commercial discussions taking place between private companies, and I do not intend to reveal any particular names.

REQUEST FOR COMMITMENT THAT PROJECT WILL PROCEED

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Madam Speaker, yesterday in spite of a higher bank rate the Canadian dollar fell by two fifths of a point to \$81.68. This morning the dollar opened at \$81.42, down another quarter of a point. This, of course, is inflationary and/or will lead to higher interest rates. Given that analysts attribute this fall to the news about Alsands, will the minister help stop this free fall of the Canadian dollar and give his ironclad commitment to the House that the Alsands project will go ahead?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I think one great contribution to help strengthen the Canadian dollar would be a change in the type of rhetoric used by the Tory opposition in this House on many subjects, including the subject of energy.

Mr. Clark: Invoke martial law!

SELF-SUFFICIENCY PREDICTION

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Madam Speaker, I will take responsibility for a lot of things but not for the failure of the National Energy Program.

In the National Energy Program the minister said that we would be self-sufficient in oil by 1990, partially because of the new supplies brought on by heavy oil and tar sands projects. Now that those projects are falling by the wayside one by one, he says we do not need the tar sands for self-sufficiency because we have Hibernia and east coast developments, in spite of the fact that he has yet to reach agreement with the coastal provinces. Could the minister tell the House why we should consider his latest prediction to be any more accurate than the prediction he made 15 months ago in the National Energy Program?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, it is our view that every effort should be put into the implementation of the Alsands project in particular. We think it would be very helpful, in terms of

our goal of self-sufficiency by 1990. I must add, however, that in the last 15 months a lot more information has been gathered about reserves in the Beaufort Sea and the offshore east coast. That information is very encouraging and would indicate that, indeed, we can achieve oil self-sufficiency by 1990 with the help of the offshore discoveries and the Beaufort Sea discoveries.

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ENERGY

DEVELOPMENT OF EAST COAST OFFSHORE RESOURCES

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources concerns settlement of the dispute with the Atlantic coast provinces respecting control and ownership of offshore resources. The minister knows that much of the hope for the future in Atlantic Canada is based on the accelerated development of submarine resources and that this development has been delayed and retarded by federal-provincial disputes. What is the state of the negotiations at the present time, particularly in Nova Scotia? Will the minister assure the House that the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland will receive a reasonable settlement from the federal government that will allow them not only to participate in development of those resources, but will also give them a fair share of the revenue?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to advise the House that an agreement in principle has been reached with the province of Nova Scotia during the night.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1120)

Mr. Lalonde: That agreement in principle was reached in the course of discussions which took place last night. There are a few points which still need to be ironed out. I expect that these points will be ironed out by the middle of next week. If that agreement is reached, indeed it will be of great benefit to Nova Scotia and will be an event which will be welcomed by everybody in Canada. It should ensure that development which is already under way will not be delayed. Contrary to what the hon. member said concerning the dispute about jurisdiction, that development will go ahead at an even faster speed in years to come.

Obviously the nature of the agreement will be revealed once everything has been ironed out and once it is ready for signature. But today I can announce that we have made a great deal of progress with Nova Scotia. In light of this development, I hope we can now make similar progress with the government of Newfoundland, and that the government of Newfoundland