

investigated this charge and will he report to the House what he has found out with regard to it? Further, would he comment on the implications this would have with respect to the security of Canada's oil supplies?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of State for Science and Technology): We have taken steps to find out whether that report is correct, but we have been unable to confirm that Congressman Gore made such a statement.

Mr. Symes: I hope, then, that the minister will track down the source of this report; I think it bears further investigation and calls for a report to the House.

One supplementary: When Mr. Armstrong, president of Imperial Oil, appeared before the committee on National Resources and Public Works this morning, he stated, with regard to the issue of buying crude oil for Canada from Venezuela:

We would expect Petro-Canada to supply the equivalent of our current contract for Venezuelan crude in terms of quality and flexibility as to volumes at competitive prices including the necessary tanker transportation.

These are the demands Imperial will be placing on Petro-Canada. Is the government prepared to acquiesce in those demands, or will it be making certain demands of Imperial in terms of providing the Canadian market with Venezuelan crude?

● (1440)

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, those matters are presently under negotiation between Petro-Canada and Petroleos de Venezuela. The hon. member knows that a supplier refinery in Canada would want to specify certain terms and conditions in any commercial contract. It is anticipated that Petro-Canada will be supplying other than the Imperial refineries in Canada. Indeed, it has been made quite clear quite recently that the Golden Eagle refinery near Quebec City is likely to be a potential customer for Venezuelan crude handled through Petro-Canada.

NUCLEAR FUSION ENERGY PROPOSAL—WHEREABOUTS OF PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a question about an important nuclear fusion energy proposal which was published here in Canada on Saturday, and the Prime Minister's conversations with President Carter about it which, of course, would be exclusively within the knowledge of the Prime Minister. However, the Prime Minister has not been seen in these buildings since Saturday night, so I have not been able to ask the question.

My question to the Deputy Prime Minister is, where is the Prime Minister? Does he feel he has better things to do than

appear in these parliament buildings or in the House of Commons?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

POSSIBILITY OF LAYING OFF 100 LANGUAGE TEACHERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. Last Friday the Public Service Alliance of Canada put out a news release asking for a meeting with the President of the Treasury Board to discuss the problems which budgetary restrictions have created for a number of language teachers. Has the minister received an invitation from the representatives of the Public Service Alliance for such a meeting? If so, does he intend to meet them and will he discuss the case of the 100-odd language teachers who are to be laid off at the end of the month?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (President of Treasury Board): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I received the invitation last Friday. Yesterday, we discussed the possibilities we have and we will meet again tomorrow afternoon. But the problem is much broader than its implications with regard to the language teachers; it hinges on the bilingualism premium in the public service generally. That problem will be discussed tomorrow afternoon.

INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT CAN ASSIGN LAID-OFF TEACHERS TO NEW POSITIONS

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, on a supplementary. The minister knows that his government made commitments to those teachers until 1983. Last week the minister spoke of trying to scrape up some money somewhere which could at least enable him to assign those employees to new positions. Can the minister tell us today whether or not he has found any money, and if he will be in a position tomorrow to offer the union some guarantee that those hundred or so teachers will not find themselves without employment on April 1, especially in view of the commitment of the government with regard to that program?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (President of Treasury Board): No, not yet, Mr. Speaker. I indicated that we had already increased the funds by \$4.3 million. So, I am not sure additional funds can be found. As I indicated to our colleague, I shall see if it is possible or not.