

Oral Questions

Hon. Alan Redway (Minister of State (Housing)): Mr. Speaker, co-operative housing is very popular in Montreal and throughout Canada. Earlier this week we did release a co-operative housing discussion paper. I intend to make a recommendation to Cabinet before year's end.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

The legal basis for sending the army into Quebec appears to be the National Defence Act which, on close reading of the act, allows any provincial premier, be it Premier Bourassa or even Premier Vander Zalm for that matter, to call in the Canadian army unilaterally for an unlimited period of time, with no parliamentary scrutiny, under the direction of the provincial premier, and the federal Treasury pays for it. I find that to be just incredible.

Given that the only protection in the act is the fact that there must be a report filed by the provincial attorney general to the Canadian Secretary of State within seven days of calling in the army, has the government received that report? If it has, would the minister please table it in the House?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I would ask my hon. colleague to read closely the act. It says: "within seven days must commence to assemble that information and then provide it".

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, now we even learned that perhaps there is not even going to be a report under the act.

The Quebec government has made public how much it is costing them with the police and the other matters. I wonder if the minister could tell the House how much it has cost the Canadian taxpayers to date to have sent the

army into Quebec. Could he also tell the House how long he expects the army is going to stay in Quebec?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, if I knew the answer to the hon. member's second question, I would be able to give him an answer to the first question as to how much it would cost.

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ENERGY

Mr. Ken Hughes (MacLeod): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

● (1200)

American energy interests, particularly in California, have been trying to create unfair natural gas regulations, unfair from a Canadian perspective.

These pernicious efforts would have had the effect of preventing Canadian natural gas producers from gaining fair access and fair prices in that market. What steps has the minister taken, and what assurances can he provide to this House that this kind of harassment of Canadian producers and exporters will not continue?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important question.

For 30 years western Canadians have been supplying gas for the California market on a stable basis. As the hon. member has remarked, the California Public Utilities Commission attempted to change the contractual rules.

I am pleased that, along with the Government of Alberta, the Government of Canada was able to make not only public statements regarding the unacceptability of that approach, but our embassy as well worked very diligently with the administration of the United States.

I am pleased that, while we did not have to invoke the free trade agreement, everyone came to the conclusion that the free trade agreement is a two way street. It works, and in this case it has worked not only in protecting Canadian interests, but Canadian gas producers and has verified the validity and the veracity of the contracts we have.