

Oral Questions

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the National Energy Board, in conjunction with the technical advisory committee on petroleum supply, has been examining the situation very closely. The hon. member will recall I gave a number of details in committee last night. I would be glad to expand on that.

Mr. Ritchie: What immediate specific steps has the government taken, and what action has the National Energy Board taken to use its considerable persuasive powers to solve local problems?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I have given a number of examples of this, for example, in response to the hon. member for Témiscamingue. However, in a fair number of instances persuasion is not enough for private parties which, subject to a change in the law, have no obligation to do what the board requests.

ASSESSMENT OF RESERVES OF CRUDE PETROLEUM—
SUFFICIENCY TO MEET DOMESTIC NEEDS AND EXPORT
COMMITMENTS

Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary arising out of the minister's recent answer. Has the federal government or the National Energy Board assessed our present reserves of crude petroleum in Canada, and have we enough for Canada's total needs and to fulfil any export commitments we have made to date?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the board has specifically delivered decisions in this regard, which were discussed very thoroughly in the standing committee. Of course, any export of petroleum which takes place on a month to month basis can only be made if the board is satisfied there is a surplus to Canadian requirements.

Mr. Woolliams: Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister will be forthright in this respect and tell us now whether, from reports of the National Energy Board, there is a sufficient supply and surplus of crude petroleum not only to supply Canada's needs—that is, our total needs everywhere—provided there is transportation but to fulfil any export commitments at this time. Surely that question is clear and we can have a yes or no answer.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, surely the answer is perfectly clear. There would have been no exports this month if the board had not been satisfied in that regard.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member for Portneuf wish to ask a supplementary question?

Mr. Godin: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I will see him in a few moments, after having heard some other supplementary questions.

[*Mr. Ritchie.*]

[*English*]

ACTION TO ENSURE SAVINGS ON WESTERN OIL USED IN
EASTERN CANADA PASSED ON TO CONSUMERS

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the minister's statement in committee last night that five million barrels of western Canadian crude oil have already been shipped to eastern Canada and that another seven million barrels will have been shipped via the Panama Canal by the end of the first quarter of 1974, what policing mechanism has the government instituted to ensure that the savings of over \$25 million in lower priced Canadian crude used by eastern refineries will be passed on to the consumer?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, with regard to shipments made through the seaway there is the possibility of lower cost. This would be taken into account in any cost increases the companies sought to pass on. With regard to shipments through the Panama Canal, the estimated average freight per barrel is around \$3 which at the present time would not indicate very much advantage in terms of cost savings.

REQUEST FOR GUARANTEE OIL PRODUCT PRICES IN
EASTERN CANADA WILL NOT RISE THIS WINTER

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): In view of the announcement by OPEC that oil prices will go up on January 1, will the minister guarantee that prices of oil products will not rise in eastern Canada during the winter season?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry but I did not hear the first part of the hon. member's question. I cannot guarantee, if there are substantial cost increases in the eastern part of the market, that prices will not go up.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Calgary South and then the hon. member for Portneuf.

OIL—WILLINGNESS OF CANADA TO SHARE IN
SHORTAGES IN OECD COUNTRIES

Mr. Peter C. Bawden (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Can the minister indicate to the House if the chairman of the National Energy Board is visiting Paris as the head of the Canadian delegation to the OECD oil committee and, if so, what mandate has the government given to the chairman for this visit? Will the minister say specifically whether Canada will indicate a willingness to share in OECD shortages and to what extent?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the chairman will be participating as a member of the Canadian delegation there. It is very possible that in conjunction with the discussion of the current situation there may be discussion of the possible allocation of supplies to other members of OECD