

*Oral Questions*

were faced with depleted inventories and that we have taken some very great initiatives.

**An hon. Member:** Name them.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** I will, in fact, name them: there are quite a number. I assure hon. members of this House that we have taken initiatives with respect to the supply situation, and I can list them seriatim if the hon. member has the time. I propose to deal with these initiatives in the debate this afternoon, since the Leader of the Opposition has indicated that he wishes to discuss this matter during the course of the debate.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, I am not interested in the hon. member's apology about his inadequacies at the moment. The National Energy Board report states quite clearly that it would be rash to predict with any certainty that Canadians will be free of oil supply problems this winter. I would draw to the minister's attention the press release containing these very words.

In light of the resignation of the government of Iran today, the political disturbances which exist in that country at this very moment, and Canada's dependency for a considerable portion of its annual supply on Iranian sources, can the minister tell the House whether the government has made any approach at the political level to authorities in Iran to ensure the continued supply of this vital oil for Canada which amounts, as I understand it, to about 100,000 barrels a day?

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that the statements made by the hon. member cannot assist in terms of the outlook for next winter, in the sense that he is attempting to dramatize that which ought not to be dramatized. We in this government are taking steps with respect to policies which the opposition does not want to support but which will allow us to reach self-sufficiency and increase our supply in Canada.

As far as dealing with the government of Iran is concerned, obviously, the information has just been received. We will, of course, be in touch respecting this matter of continuing supply. We are taking steps to increase and maximize the amount of available domestic production, and we intend to continue to monitor the situation very closely. We are confident that we will be able to make it through this winter, and we will do the very best we can in terms of domestic production, domestic availability and international supply to assure that this particular objective is reached.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. minister speaks about confidence in facing the situation this winter. The National Energy Board report states that it would be rash to predict with any certainty that Canadians will be free from oil supply problems this winter.

Will the minister depart from that complacent attitude to understand the gravity of what the National Energy Board report states, and move with some speed to establish the Emergency Supplies Allocation Board? What is the minister's justification, in light of the report of the NEB and the instability in the Middle East, for not having appointed the

[Mr. Hnatyshyn.]

members of this board? If he has not done so to date, will he do it today so that somebody can get on the job, even though the minister does not seem to be on it at the moment?

• (1420)

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, all I can say to the hon. member is that he clearly does not understand the question. He did not understand it when he was in government, and that is one of the reasons we are facing any serious prospect with respect to this winter.

The fact of the matter is that the department is setting up a support basis upon which any emergency allocation would be available. This is in place and is proceeding. As the hon. member knows, it only comes into effect when there is a crisis and the matter is reported to the House for debate under the legislation which was passed in the last Parliament. We do not have a crisis situation now. The Energy Board release indicates that the situation is manageable, but points out that there are circumstances that will cause the situation over the winter to be fragile.

I have encouraged the National Energy Board to make these reports available to the Canadian people. I think we should have this openness in terms of assessing the situation in Canada today, so that people can realize this is a commodity which should be treated with care and that there should not be the attitude that was taken previously with respect to energy supply—the stand-pat, do-nothing attitude of the previous government.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

MEETING OF PROVINCIAL MINISTERS ON OIL SUPPLIES THIS WINTER

**Mr. Herb Breau (Gloucester):** Mr. Speaker, the minister may very well say that there are no problems, but the National Energy Board has stated that it would be rash to predict with certainty that Canadians will be free of oil supply problems this winter.

In view of the fact that the provincial energy ministers thought there could be an emergency this winter, when they met last week or the week before in Calgary to discuss this problem, and undertook to provide a report to the minister, can the minister tell the House if he has received this report? If he has, what is in it, and what will he do about it?

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, as usual, the hon. member's question is a week late: it has already been asked in the House by one of his colleagues.

I did receive a report from the provincial ministers. On a previous occasion, when responding to his colleague who sits not very far from him, I pointed out that we have been in close consultation with the provincial ministers. There was a suggestion that the technical advisory committee with respect to allocation be considered for reinstatement. I pointed out on previous occasions that there is some legal impediment with