

Oral Questions

Affairs. In light of the announcement that the United Kingdom government intends to recognize the new government of Iran, and President Carter's statement that the United States stands ready to work with the new government of Ayatollah Khomeini, can the minister inform the House whether Canada intends to recognize the new regime, what criteria will be applied in this decision and what instructions have been sent to the Canadian diplomatic personnel in Iran?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, may I say, with respect, that I do not want to answer that question orally this afternoon in terms of the type of instructions and the like that have been sent. I will be glad, obviously, to inform the House in a formal way as to what is being done.

I have every expectation that we will be extending recognition to the government of Iran in the normal and routine way in which it is accorded to established regimes, but since the situation is evolving so quickly, I would prefer not to make any more direct statements at this time.

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ENERGY**STEPS TO ENSURE ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF OIL TO EAST COAST REFINERIES**

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Having regard to the minister's earlier remarks concerning a secured oil supply for Canadian refineries, and in light of the announced cutbacks in deliveries of crude oil to some east coast refineries, will the minister indicate whether his contingency plan has now been put into operation and whether this will restore the level of oil supplies to the east coast refineries?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the contingency plan to which I referred a short time ago had to do with the situation which would be created if the international energy agency emergency oil sharing program were put into place. That contingency plan deals with the allocation of crude, the allocation of products and even, possibly, the necessity for a rationing program. That was the contingency plan to which I was referring.

As regards the reallocation problems which have been created for eastern refineries, in Quebec and Atlantic Canada, I believe that the arrangements we presently have in place, the submissions by the industry to the National Energy Board for exchanges using western crude displacing crude at Chicago, should tide us through at least for the present.

Mr. Crosby: In light of the actual cutbacks to certain east coast refineries, I should like to ask the minister whether he can give the House an indication of who exactly is responsible for the maintenance of adequate oil supplies for east coast

[Mr. Roche.]

refineries, and whether he has any indication that those supplies will be continued in the future.

Mr. Gillespie: As I have indicated in the House, I have every reason to believe that the source of Venezuelan crude will be made available to Canada, based on the undertakings which I received when I was in Venezuela. The Mexican crude will not be available to us until the end of the year, but it will help us to reduce our dependence on Middle Eastern crude over a period of time and, therefore, to increase our take from western hemisphere sources, therefore reducing our dependence on the Middle East, an area which is unstable so far as oil supplies are concerned.

I believe that the arrangements, which are still very much of an ad hoc, temporary nature, even though they are of an emergency nature in the sense that western crude is being displaced in Chicago to provide for the shortfall in Atlantic Canada and in Quebec, should, as I indicated a moment ago, tide us over for the time being.

[Translation]

INQUIRY AS TO MEASURES GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO TAKE TO AVOID ENERGY SHORTAGE, ESPECIALLY IN EASTERN CANADA

Mr. Herb Breau (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Could the minister tell us whether he did receive the report requested by his department on the future of Canada in the energy field? If so, could he tell the House what measures his department is taking to face both the immediate and the long term situation which is critical when it comes to the independence of Canada and particularly of the eastern provinces in the energy field? Could he also tell us whether the government is still supporting the natural gas pipeline project between Montreal and Halifax because such a pipeline could be an alternative in such areas as energy supply in such cases.

[English]

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has raised the question of a natural gas pipeline to the maritimes. That particular proposal has been submitted to the National Energy Board, which will be dealing with it during the course of this year. That submission, along with the extension of the pipeline from Montreal to Quebec City and points in between, could have a significant impact on reducing Canadian dependence on foreign oil. Figures which I have seen indicate that the extension of the gas pipeline to the maritimes could displace as much as 100,000 barrels a day of otherwise imported crude oil.