

Oral Questions

does not want any further delay by the Liberal Senate and the Liberal Opposition who voted against it on third reading in this House. It is the most successful agency ever to crop up in Atlantic Canada from the Government of Canada. The jealousy and determination to gut it by Members opposite are resented by everyone in the region.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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IMMIGRATION

DELAY IN PROCESSING REFUGEE STATUS CLAIMS

Mr. John Ostrom (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Some lawyers are claiming that delays in Canada's refugee process are resulting in the arrest and sometimes even the murder of relatives of individuals who are presently in Canada awaiting authorization of their claims. What can the Minister do to prevent more refugees from being hurt?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat sorry to read about the statement that they had made in the paper, for two reasons. First, in many urgent cases we have helped people who have approached our office when we felt there was an urgent case to be made. I would encourage people to continue to do that. In fact, I think some of the people in that group have done that.

We have also said, and I think it is pretty clear from the article, that we are trying to speed up the process through Bill C-55 and Bill C-84 so that we can deal with these things more expeditiously.

Bill C-55 and Bill C-84 are linked in substance. However, we need Bill C-55, which is now in the other place, in order to resolve this sort of problem.

Let me just say finally that I met with a group of immigration lawyers last week, one of whom had signed that letter and was quoted in that article, and it was not raised with me at that time as an urgent matter, which I also find somewhat disappointing.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor. These will be the last questions in Question Period.

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NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD

REQUEST THAT CABINET REVIEW DECISION ON NATURAL GAS EXPORTS

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and

Resources, if it is possible to draw him back to his seat for a moment.

The Minister said in his answer with respect to Pan-Alberta Gas that this issue would come to Cabinet shortly. In view of the fact that under the trade deal there is a lock-in clause in the event of shortages for the proportion of petroleum and natural gas and other energy products which we ship to the United States, will the Minister see to it that there is a full review by Cabinet of this issue? Will he see to it that there is full security for Canadian consumers guaranteed by the decision in the review by Cabinet when it takes place?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the free trade agreement in no way obligates Canadians to sell natural gas—no one is forced to sell natural gas. Exporters are free to negotiate the best commercial terms they can get. They are free to refuse to sell if they are not satisfied.

The agreement offers assurances that Canadian gas exporters can enjoy enhanced access to the U.S. market, and that when they do they will have equitable treatment by U.S. regulatory bodies.

The only situation in which there is any obligation to continue any supply whatsoever would be in the event that an emergency is declared. That responsibility is not anywhere near as onerous as the responsibility entered into by our Liberal predecessors through the International Energy Authority agreement that applies to oil.

The free trade agreement has no connection with the application that was just approved by the NEB. Therefore, it has no consequences in connection with it.

EFFECT OF CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, that statement is simply not true.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Langdon: I put this to the Minister as a question. If there is a shortage in Canada, is it not the fact that there has to be the same proportion of exports of natural gas maintained to the United States as is the case before such shortage conditions obtain? If that is true, does that not mean higher prices for Canadians and more difficult situations of shortage?

Mr. Rodriguez: Have you read that one, John?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the short answer to it is no, it is not true. As a member of the International Energy Agency we have agreed to the IEA emergency oil sharing system, something which was undertaken by our predecessor.

Mr. Foster: At 7 per cent.