

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**ENERGY****SIGNING OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN QUEBEC AND U.S.  
NORTHEASTERN STATES**

**Mr. Pierre Gimaiél (Lac-Saint-Jean):** Madam Speaker, last night, on the CBC news, I heard that the Premier of Quebec attended the signing of an agreement yesterday in the United States—in the northeastern states to be exact—for the sale of electric power by the Government of Quebec to our American neighbours, for the sum of \$5 billion.

I am of course pleased that our power surpluses are being used, but what really worries me is that this is a long-term twenty-year agreement for the sale of a steady supply, not surplus power, to our neighbours to the South who will probably use it to expand industry in the states concerned.

I am very worried, Madam Speaker, especially since today Quebecers are paying exorbitant prices for their very own electric power. The Canadian Government has made a number of attempts, through legislation, to bring industry to Quebec and to the rest of Canada. In return, instead of taking advantage of the industrial potential of its electric power supply to attract the same companies, the Quebec Government is talking about a long-term contract for power sales over a period of twenty years, at a price guaranteed to be 80 per cent of the cost of producing the same power, using other sources of energy, in the United States.

I am concerned about my constituents, because I think we need the power, and furthermore, I fail to understand why the Leader of that Government who himself accused Maurice Duplessis of giving away our iron ore to the Americans, why he is now giving away our electric power, our only made-in-Quebec source of energy.

I therefore ask the Canadian Government to be—

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**THE ECONOMY****FORECAST OF INCREASED UNEMPLOYMENT—GOVERNMENT  
POSITION ON JOB CREATION PROJECTS**

**Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Today the Conference Board of Canada reports that, while recovery is under way, it will be so modest that unemployment will rise even higher. One of the reasons for this is that Canadians are running scared that the tentative recovery which may be under way may be sabotaged by excessive stimulation which might reflate the economy and start interest rates rising again. People are afraid to call back workers, and they are afraid to hire new ones.

Informetrica has identified 73 projects due to start this year which are worth about \$7 billion and could create at least 140,000 jobs. Will the Minister sit down with his officials and identify what action the Government can take to get these projects off the drawing board?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, this is what I have been doing in preparation for the budget. We are examining what steps will be appropriate to ensure that the recovery which is taking place will be even stronger than what is anticipated. What those steps will be, will be announced in the budget.

**REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION**

**Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre):** Madam Speaker, my supplementary is also directed to the Minister of Finance. My point is that some of these projects do not require a dime, or else very little money from the federal Treasury. They do not involve massive expenditures and stimulation in borrowing. Some of them involve the settlement of jurisdictional disputes. Others involve the removal of obstacles in the regulatory procedure, and they include such items as the natural gas pipeline in British Columbia, petrochemical and methanol plants in the Prairies, a water line in Saskatchewan, and the Hibernia-related projects in Newfoundland. Why does the Minister not identify the government actions which could take place and which could get the private sector started on these measures now with limited cost to the Treasury?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, there is nothing to prevent the Hibernia project from proceeding if the promoters are convinced that they are ready to proceed. They would only need to put an application before the National Energy Board and follow the normal procedures which are required. As far as the natural gas pipeline in British Columbia is concerned, again this is a decision which has to be taken by the Government of British Columbia, to begin with. As the Hon. Member knows, the Government of British Columbia has not yet decided what is the preferred option and is examining the matter at the present time.

I am happy that the Hon. Member recognizes that many of those projects do not necessarily require government funding. It is a matter for the sponsors to proceed with the necessary authorizations which are required, in some instances from the provincial Governments and in some other instances from the appropriate federal regulatory authorities. At the present time, as she knows, for instance, with regard to Hibernia, it is not the regulatory process which is delaying those projects at all.

**GOVERNMENT BORROWING LEGISLATION**

**Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre):** Madam Speaker, my final supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Finance. It would be an absolute tragedy to lose the ground