

## Oral Questions

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

## ENERGY

## ACTION TO ASSURE BRITISH COLUMBIA CONSUMERS OF SUFFICIENT NATURAL GAS THIS WINTER

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources following the exchange a few days ago about the announcement by West Coast Transmission that gas supplies for British Columbia at peak periods would be cut by perhaps 10 per cent this winter, and the assurance by the minister that he would look into this situation. Can the minister tell us whether he has been in touch with the National Energy Board and whether the possibility of this cutback in supplies to the gas consumers of British Columbia this winter has now been eliminated?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. The board had a meeting yesterday to discuss this question. I have been advised that at the moment the board has not received all relevant data pertaining to the matter. The board did, however, indicate a certain degree of optimism that with the assistance of distributors and transmission companies it might prove possible to minimize the disruption which this accident in the field has caused.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Is there any real difficulty about this? Is there any reason that priority cannot be given to the gas consumers of British Columbia to this extent in preference to the export of gas through the same pipeline system?

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Mr. Speaker, I expect to be in a better position to respond to that when the board in turn has all the relevant data. I hope to be able to satisfy my hon. friend and others on that as soon as possible.

## APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD TO FILL VACANCY

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct this question to the Prime Minister. In view of the lack of a chairman of the National Energy Board for some two months under very difficult conditions, may I ask the Prime Minister whether, since we are likely to adjourn, he can give the House the assurance that there will in fact be a chairman of this important board appointed by the government before the Prime Minister leaves the country?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, as the minister replied yesterday to a similar question, we have been discussing this subject and hope to make an appointment relatively soon.

## CO-OPERATION BETWEEN FEDERAL AND ALBERTA GOVERNMENTS ON POLICY MATTERS

**Mr. Gordon Towers (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, I have a related question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the letter to Premier Lougheed of

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Alberta which was tabled in the House on March 10, 1972, by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources stating in part that "it is of paramount importance that the relationship of the government of Canada to the government of Alberta in energy policy matters be one of co-operation and collaboration", I should like to ask the minister why that assurance was not honoured?

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I would respond to the hon. gentleman that, given the time constraint in which this decision had to be made, it was honoured to the best of our ability. In particular, with regard to the decision of the National Energy Board on September 12 concerning export of oil to the United States, we had really only a period of overnight to make that decision. We discussed it with the Alberta minister, who was present in Ottawa the following day, just as soon as the cabinet decision had been made.

**Mr. Towers:** Did the minister attempt to meet with the premier of Alberta on his recent visit to Alberta?

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Mr. Speaker, I did see a report on the morning that I flew to Calgary to see the industry that the premier expected to see me. That report in the *Globe and Mail* turned out to be a mistake. The premier was on a political tour of Alberta. I do anticipate seeing a number of ministers probably during the first week of October.

## ACTION TO ASSURE BRITISH COLUMBIA CONSUMERS OF SUFFICIENT NATURAL GAS THIS WINTER

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the minister dealing with gas supplies for the people of British Columbia. While it may be necessary for the minister and the National Energy Board to canvass the situation to see whether other sources of supply can be made available to British Columbians, I want to ask the minister whether he can give the assurance he has been asked to give, namely, that if other sources cannot be made available he will undertake to see to it that the supplies necessary to meet the needs of British Columbia customers are given priority over export to the United States.

**Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I think I should like to have all the facts of the situation before arriving at a final determination. As the board has indicated, it is not yet in a position to do so. Perhaps I can repeat the advice I received from the board, that it may prove possible to avoid or reduce to minimal proportions any adverse effects on consumers of gas served through the West Coast system. I hope that is so, but I shall be in a better position in a couple of days to respond more fully.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands on a supplementary, then the hon. member for Abitibi, followed by the hon. member for Calgary North, and then we will try to go to another subject.