

can assure the hon. member that the present Minister of State for Science and Technology is very much aware of the situation in this regard. He is very conscious of encouraging research in the energy field and increasing research and development generally in this country, as was made clear when the minister announced increased funding in the area of research and development generally in this country under this government.

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NORTHERN PIPELINES

PROVISION OF NATURAL GAS LINE IN CANADA FROM COAST TO COAST

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I gather from statements made by the minister that he recognizes the infinite value of energy self-sufficiency. If I read the statements of the minister and his colleagues correctly, they appear to appreciate the immeasurable potential for economic development if we in Canada were able to provide a guaranteed source of competitively priced energy from coast to coast.

I ask the minister on what day in which year will the government proceed with the building of a pipeline linking the natural gas fields of Alberta and Saskatchewan to consumers on both the east and west coasts, so that we get the benefits that I have mentioned and which the minister has mentioned, and in addition get the benefit of both short and long-term employment opportunities?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Where do you stand on the pre-build?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to note the interest of my hon. colleague in energy self-sufficiency and independence. I remind him, however, that the government has already announced the extension of the natural gas pipeline to Quebec and we have indicated that its extension to the maritimes and to Halifax was a high priority of this government and it was the option that we favoured.

However, the hon. member is aware of the reservations expressed by the National Energy Board about it. We are considering the situation and we hope to be in a position to announce later some specific decisions in that respect. As regards conditions on the west coast, especially on Vancouver Island, I have already met twice my colleague the British Columbia energy minister and I hope that the project will be carried out in the very near future. Indeed, the appropriate British Columbia board will be holding hearings on that issue this fall, if I am not mistaken.

● (1440)

[English]

On both aspects, whether on the east coast or the west coast, this government is indeed very involved. We are talking to the people concerned. As I said, we are attaching very great importance to this.

Mr. Deans: Madam Speaker, the minister appears to recognize that energy is now, and no doubt will remain, the single most important resource any country can have.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Tell us about the pre-build.

Mr. Deans: Recognizing that economic development, employment and quality of life would be directly affected by the availability of competitively priced energy, not only now but into the future, how then can the government speak about Canada having a surplus energy resource that we could well use to develop our country for the next 50 years?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Tell us about the steel workers.

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, this government indeed attaches a great deal of importance to energy, but before saying that energy is of the most important value in this country, as far as this government is concerned the people of Canada are the first value.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: That means providing the people of Canada with jobs and income that are fair, preventing inflation from going too high and ensuring growth in this country. If I may leave the preamble of the hon. member's question after this important clarification as to at least the difference between our respective parties, I remind him that energy exports like other exports are related to a broad economic policy. You have to take into account the benefits for the whole of Canada. This is something that the hon. member may not understand but that the NDP government of Saskatchewan understands.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: The NDP government of Saskatchewan has approved very substantial exports of heavy oil.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

GARRISON DIVERSION PROJECT—INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT ASSURED PROJECT UNLIKELY TO BE COMPLETED

Mr. Norman Kelly (Scarborough Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is addressed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. According to press reports of mounting opposition