

*Adjournment Debate*

Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes) was that he would take notice of the question because the Minister was not in the House that day.

The Canadian Medical Association has kept the federal and provincial Governments informed of the establishment of this task force. At the invitation of the CMA, a representative of the Department of National Health and Welfare attended two meetings of the task force. A representative of the Province of Nova Scotia also attended. They did not participate in the deliberations, but they were there as observers.

The terms of reference of the task force, have been made public. They are very broadly worded, but they emphasize concerns about the introduction of new procedures and technologies in the health care system, and the demographic changes such as the increased aging population. It is understood that the task force is still in the process of getting organized and oriented. It will be holding a press conference of its own in about two or three weeks, at which time it will presumably clarify how it will proceed and what it hopes to achieve.

There have been a number of important studies on the health care system in the recent past; the 1980 report by Mr. Justice Emmett Hall entitled "Canada's National Provincial Health Program for the 1980s", and also the 1981 report of the Parliamentary Task Force on Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements, entitled "Fiscal Federalism in Canada". I trust that the members of the task force will want to review carefully these useful reports, as well as a number of other research studies that have been carried out.

The task force will undoubtedly request data and information from the federal and provincial Governments to assist in its work. The Department of National Health and Welfare is prepared to respond to such requests to the extent that information is available. The Department will watch with interest the progress of the task force, and I hope it will make a useful contribution to the health care system.

ENERGY—PRICE OF NATURAL GAS EXPORTED TO UNITED STATES. (B) LINKAGE TO PRICE OF OIL

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River):** Mr. Speaker, I want to raise some issues in relation to the question before us which will tend to focus the question on those issues we really should be discussing in the House at this time. The Minister's response would seem to indicate that the Government really does not have a sense of direction as far as a pricing policy for natural gas at the present time. As a result I think we have created enormous difficulties for ourselves.

The matter goes beyond that, Mr. Speaker. I think that at this time there are some very serious questions in this country about the national energy policy generally. Given the present situation of declining oil prices in the world market and the glut of natural gas, the Government obviously based its original national energy policy on false assumptions. Then in 1982 we had the national energy policy update which tried to address some of the problems the Government failed to anticipate. Given the kinds of answers the Minister is giving in

the House now, and in the beginning of 1983, as well as the answers given by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), we are more adrift than when the update was made. This lack of direction on the energy and financial questions demonstrates the fact that we have no effective national energy policy. What is required, given the changing circumstances and the false assumptions on which the first policy was developed, is an indication of policy parameters or guidelines for the vital decisions to be made on energy.

● (1820)

What is also required on the matter of pricing natural gas in Canada, as well as the export price, is that we also deal with Government revenues. The collapse of Government revenues in the energy sector must be causing severe headaches for the Minister of Finance. It is certainly causing headaches for the entire country. We are asked to deal with \$89 billion in spending estimates, while at the same time we see a good portion of our revenues dissolving. Unfortunately, this does not give the House much confidence in the Government's energy policy, its gas-pricing policy or its economic policy. The Minister of Finance should give us an indication where we stand on the spending estimates and the revenues that were originally expected to come from the energy sector.

We need a national energy policy that relates to a much broader national industrial strategy and a much broader area of economic activity. In its national energy policy the Government seems to have identified our energy resources as a single target area for revenue, economic growth, and expansion. That was the basic mistake in the original national energy policy in 1980, the Government has attempted to hold on to that policy in the 1982 update. There are still serious questions today which have not been resolved. The Government is reacting to a crisis, without benchmarks. Decisions are being made in this House about which people are very seriously concerned. For example, as a result of the pricing policy for domestic natural gas the Government dropped \$300 million in revenue. If we want to get the economy rolling again, and if the Government is going to live up to its commitment for the pricing of oil and gas, those lost revenues must be made up.

An even broader question is whether we are to continue to export natural gas to the United States. If we do, we better consider retaining the pricing arrangements previously made in that market.

**Mr. Dave Dingwall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I will address the issue that was raised on January 26. The National Energy Board now estimates that we have marketable gas reserves of over 76 trillion cubic feet in conventional producing areas, and the country's remaining ultimate marketable gas potential is estimated at over three times currently established reserves. Therefore, as a Government, we are taking steps to provide Canadians with strong incentives to become gas consumers.