

Is it the wish of the House that we proceed with routine proceedings, then go to the question period, and then return to motions for the purpose of putting the motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ABANDONMENT OF CHERRY POINT OIL TANKER TERMINAL BY UNITED STATES AS CONDITION FOR TRANSPORTING ALASKA GAS THROUGH MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. When the minister says that he hopes to persuade the United States to abandon Cherry Point as a terminal for the tanker route down the west coast from Alaska and to go farther down to California as the terminal, can the minister say whether he made it clear to the hon. Mr. Train that the Cherry Point terminal is unacceptable to Canada, and that this terminal must be abandoned as a necessary basis for any co-operation with interests in the United States in transporting natural gas from Alaska via a Mackenzie valley pipe line to the United States mid-west?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, at our meeting yesterday we discussed pollution problems and environmental hazards along the boundary between Canada and the United States. We did not discuss oil and gas policy as such.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, when the minister says that he hopes to persuade the United States to abandon Cherry Point as the terminal for the tanker route from Alaska, does this mean that the government of Canada has decided to take the position that the elimination of the Cherry Point terminal should be a condition prior to any co-operation or agreement regarding the use of a Mackenzie valley pipeline for the transmission of gas from Alaska to the United States mid-west? Has the Canadian government taken such a position?

Mr. Davis: No, Mr. Speaker, but I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that Cherry Point is now adequately supplied with oil through the Trans-Mountain line from Alberta, and I believe this should always be the case.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I wish the minister would answer the question, but I think he did when he said no. When the minister says that he hopes to persuade the United States to abandon Cherry Point as a terminal, does that mean that the Canadian government has already agreed to the construction of a gas pipeline down the Mackenzie valley to transport gas? Or is the position of the Canadian government still that frequently enunciated by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, namely,

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that this is a decision that must be made by the National Energy Board? In other words, does the minister know what he is talking about?

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition posed two questions. The answer to the first question is no, and the answer to the second question, namely, whether I know what I am talking about, is yes.

ADEQUACY OF PROTECTIVE MEASURES AGAINST POTENTIAL OIL SPILLS OFF WEST COAST

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey-White Rock): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of the Environment. Having in mind the criticism in recent days by the head of the Science Council of Canada, Dr. McTaggart-Cowan, of what he calls the snail's pace progress being made by the Minister of Transport and the Minister of the Environment to protect the west coast of British Columbia from potential oil spillage along the tanker route to Cherry Point, which is within 18 miles of my riding, is the minister satisfied with the protection that exists, or will he pay heed to the warning issued by the head of the Science Council within the last four or five days?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I will ever be completely satisfied with the measures that we are taking, but our performance recently on the west coast relative to the spill from the freighter *Irish Stardust* was much better than that with respect to the *Arrow* with which Dr. McTaggart-Cowan is familiar.

MEASURES TO SECURE ABANDONMENT OF CHERRY POINT OIL TANKER TERMINAL

Mr. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of the Environment. Can the minister tell the House whether the government intends to take further measures, possibly along with President Nixon, to change the Cherry Point terminal, and will he tell the House why the government agreed to a contingency plan that does not definitely eliminate the most significant danger of the TAPS tanker route, which is the Cherry Point terminal?

Hon. Jack Davis (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am certain the hon. member for Vancouver South is aware that there is a great deal of traffic already moving through the Strait of Juan de Fuca and through the waters about which we are concerned off Cherry Point. Some of the vessels in that area now are carrying oil and have done so for the last 50 years, so we are concerned about contingency measures there now.

Mr. Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the remarks of the Minister of the Environment, but can he tell the House upon what possible basis he was able to say to the public through the press that the Mackenzie is the trump card and, further, that he does not see any real possibility of tankers moving in the critical areas off the west coast, unless he has some sort of agreement in principle or otherwise from Mr. Train?