

1993, be answered. As I pointed out before, these questions deal with the expenditure of public funds. I feel there is no reason for such a time delay as has taken place in answering these questions.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

ENERGY

EAST COAST OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS RESOURCES— INCLUSION OF QUEBEC IN AGREEMENT BEING SOUGHT— APPLICATION TO OTHER PROVINCES

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister arising out of his remarks on energy last Thursday evening when he referred, to quote him, to "the question of an agreement with the Atlantic provinces on offshore development". His previous references have always included the province of Quebec as well as the Atlantic provinces. Was it simply an oversight that the Prime Minister did not include Quebec along with the Atlantic provinces in his remarks on Thursday when he referred to an agreement, or is an agreement now being sought separately with the Atlantic provinces?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. The agreement we would hope to reach would, of course, be applicable to all of Canada because all provinces except two do have some seacoast. It is a matter of knowing how we would reach such an agreement. In the last couple of years we have been working with the five easternmost provinces, Quebec plus the Atlantic provinces, and it would be our hope to continue to work in that direction. I certainly did not want to convey any contrary impression by my statement on Thursday. I think it may be known that one province, which is not Quebec, may not want to be part of the group of five, but I really should not be speaking for them. Our desire at the federal level is to reach an agreement with the entire five.

Mr. Stanfield: In view of the obvious significance of offshore development of probable petroleum resources, can the Prime Minister give us an indication as to his timetable in respect of the resolution of this matter leading to an agreement on offshore mineral and petroleum rights?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I cannot, of course, say what the timetable is because this involves the five provincial governments. Our desire would have been to solve this a year ago, and last summer I thought we had come very close to doing so when we reached agreement that we should not spend too much time arguing about the constitutional question of ownership but should address ourselves to the problems of administration and division of the proceeds. The discussions did proceed from a year and a half ago until a point last spring when we put before the provinces a scheme we thought would have their agreement for solving this difficult problem. However, I am told that one of the provinces did not want to go along with the

Oral Questions

others, and I think at this stage they are trying to work it out among themselves. I have had some correspondence in the last two months with some of the five easternmost provinces, and I have asked them quite bluntly: Do you want to negotiate as a group or do you want to go it alone, because we want to proceed with this thing? I am waiting for their answer.

Mr. Stanfield: In view of the Prime Minister's answer to my first question that the government was seeking an agreement with virtually all the provinces, although discussions were active with the five eastern provinces, am I to assume that an agreement between the government of Canada and Quebec and the four Atlantic provinces would still involve further discussions with other provinces such as British Columbia before any settlement could be considered final?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, depending on the nature of the agreement we would reach, it might vary, but I think it would be fair to say that generally our position is that we will want to discuss this with all the provinces. The Leader of the Opposition will remember that in the fall of 1969 the position we put to all the provinces was that we wanted to reach a settlement out of court by political discussion and arrangement. That is still our desired position. When we found that our 1969 proposition was not making enough progress—some provinces had accepted it but certainly nothing like a majority—we accepted to deal with the five Atlantic provinces, the idea being that the case of British Columbia had already been settled in the courts. After that settlement, both Mr. Pearson and myself said that we were still prepared to seek a political arrangement and not just act on the Supreme Court decision. This is still our position, but we are certainly not giving a priority now to discussions with British Columbia as the courts have already settled the law in that case. Such is not the situation, of course, with the easternmost provinces.

Mr. Forrestall: What about the 50 per cent?

Mr. Trudeau: Do you have a problem?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. At this point may I remind hon. members that we have only a 20-minute question period today pursuant to an order of the House. That being so, we should use the 20 minutes for questions and answers as much as possible. I will recognize the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain for a supplementary question, but we should try for the remaining time to have as few supplementary questions as possible.

● (1420)

OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS RESOURCES—NEGOTIATIONS WITH PROVINCES—NECESSITY OF AMENDING CERTAIN PROVINCIAL BOUNDARIES ACTS

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Prime Minister. Does the federal government offer to the provinces in these negotiations include an amendment to the Quebec Boundaries Act, the Ontario Boundaries Act and the Manitoba Boundaries Act?