

Oral Questions

danger is, of course, no greater than at the time when the pipeline will in fact be constructed across Alaska, which is not as close as seems to be suggested. As to the government being aware of the problem, I would remind the House that under Mr. St. Laurent, as many hon. members will recall, the late Mr. C. D. Howe was very forthright in having pipelines built across Canada precisely to meet the type of problem that is being discussed this morning.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. members will appreciate that we are spending a good deal of time on this question. I appreciate that it is important, but we should very soon move on to the next question. For the moment, the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Calgary South.

Mr. Bawden: I appreciate the Prime Minister's explanation, but he did not answer my question. Can he tell us when a contingency plan will be made known to the House, and will he say something about the question of encouraging Canadians to develop oil reserves that will be owned by Canadians?

Mr. Trudeau: I do not think I can add much to the answer I gave a few moments ago when I indicated—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: I understand a lot of hon. members do not want me to answer anyhow. This is the subject we have been discussing. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources reported to the House at least a couple of weeks ago about these talks. The question at that time was on the other aspect, the so-called continental oil policy. The minister explained that his discussions with United States officials had to do with security of supply to eastern Canada.

OIL—DISCUSSIONS WITH VENEZUELA ON SECURITY OF SUPPLIES FOR EASTERN CANADA

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Has there been any discussion with Venezuela regarding security of supplies to eastern Canada in the form of offshore oil? Can he tell us whether Venezuela is interested in receiving firm assurances from the government of Canada, as to future contracts rather than continuing to negotiate with private companies?

• (1140)

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the second part of the question, there has been no intimation of this kind from the government of Venezuela. We have not had any specific discussions recently with that country about the security of oil supplies although, as the Prime Minister has said, in the question of the security of oil supplies for Europe and North America as a whole Venezuela is included.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

LABOUR RELATIONS

WEST COAST MARINE PILOTS STRIKE—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO SETTLE

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. Now that the west coast pilots have walked off the job, does the minister now intend to intervene personally in the dispute, the prolongation of which could have very serious consequences for the economy of western Canada? I might say to the minister that this is not the time to be timid.

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's invitation to be bold, but I want to advise him that in this case there is no federal legislation that applies to industrial relations of this kind. The pilots in this dispute are not considered employees but, rather, contractors in their own right and in that sense employers. This is not the typical situation of a collective agreement between employees and an employer.

Mr. McGrath: In view of the consequential effects of this strike, may I suggest to the minister that the situation warrants that he not hide behind the letter of the law.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. That question is not in order.

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct my supplementary to the Minister of Transport. How long is the minister willing to see this stoppage of movement of freight and other commodities through the west coast ports continue before using his good offices to intercede to bring the parties together so that freight movements through these ports can be resumed?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am as anxious as the hon. member to see this situation end. Officials of my department are already on the scene trying to get the parties together. As the Minister of Labour mentioned, this is a dispute between two corporations, not between a union and a company.

Mr. Andre: The point is, freight is not moving.

Mr. McGrath: We are looking at the results.

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): The only thing we can do is to try to get the parties together. The last offer made by the pilotage authority was 7½ per cent, which will bring the average salary of pilots to \$32,000 a year. That is the situation at the moment. According to law, the pilotage authority has to pay for its own costs. It is a difficult problem and we are involved in it. The pilotage authority has waived the obligation upon shipowners to use pilots in certain waters. I hope our efforts will be successful; otherwise parliament will have to compel people to go back to work.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina-Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is diverted to the Minister of Transport. In view of the fact the demands of the B.C. coast pilots for the most part have to do with working condi-