

Oral Questions

Ontario when foreign utilities are provided from a government stockpile program undertaken with Canadian taxpayers' dollars?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): I have always made it very clear that the so-called cartel arrangement excluded in every way the relationships between the producers and consumers of Canada. The Canadian government's position from the very start was that the consumer utilities of this country should make their own arrangements with Canadian producers, and that was the basic policy.

As to the second aspect of the policy, that is to say the stockpile to which the hon. member alluded, that stockpile, I believe, was a very important safety measure for Canada to ensure that at all times there will be adequate back-up supplies for Canadian consumer utilities, given the interest in our export markets. As the hon. member knows, we have a policy which secures Canadian consumers on the basis of 30 years, but additionally we have the back-up of the stockpile.

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ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE**EFFECT OF COURT DECISION ON URANIUM CARTEL REGULATIONS—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice with respect to that matter. It arises out of the decision of Mr. Justice Evans which effectively precludes people in the industry, people with knowledge and others, from disclosing to any investigation carried out under the Combines Investigation Act facts rather than allegations of what the facts may be. Has the Minister of Justice considered the effect of this provision and will he tell the House what he intends to do to rectify the situation?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Justice): We are considering the matter, but I am not in a position today to reach a conclusion on that. Obviously, it would be very difficult if impediments were put in the way of the director of investigation and research.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Would the Minister of Justice consider very quickly changing once again the gag order that has been placed on this matter as the time for an appeal with respect to the action in which the Minister of Justice must have a great interest, particularly because of the attitude of full disclosure, brought by six people in the Supreme Court of Ontario is running out this week, would the minister let this House know whether or not it is his intention, as chief law officer of the Crown, to use as one primary vehicle an appeal of the judgment which clearly renders toothless and useless the combines investigation which the minister is setting up with respect to this matter?

[Mr. Huntington.]

Mr. Basford: I think that the remark of the House leader of the opposition carries the judgment far beyond its intent and I would not want to adopt that language at all.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Let us look at the judgment to refresh the minister's mind.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There may be an argument at other times. I will permit the hon. member a supplementary question now.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): I have a simple supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Does the Minister of Justice intend to appeal the ruling of Mr. Justice Evans with respect to the right of the people inside and outside the industry and people with direct knowledge of what happened within the cartel to give evidence and come clean before the combines investigation which the government has set up? Will he appeal that order?

Mr. Basford: I want to ensure that the director is not under any impediment.

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ENERGY**URANIUM CARTEL—AVAILABILITY OF FILES TO COMBINES INVESTIGATORS**

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): My question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the necessity of ensuring that there will be absolutely no impediments put on the director of combines in his investigation, may I ask the minister what steps he has taken to ensure that there are no impediments. Is he, has he, or will he make it possible for the director of combines to produce documents which he has in his possession, and will he also ensure and direct that all pertinent and relevant files within his department are opened to the Combines Investigation Branch?

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): We made it very clear that all the files and all the information we have are fully available to the director of investigation and research.

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COMBINES**URANIUM CARTEL—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE OF FULL INVESTIGATION**

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In view of the potential conflict of interest that seems to be arising here, since one of the parties under investigation by the Combines Investigation Branch is in fact the government itself, and since the director of the Combines Investigation Branch answers to the government, what steps is the minister taking to ensure that the Combines Investigation Branch will