

Oral Questions

[English]

Mr. Shields: I am complaining about the insensitivity of the Government to the plight of the young people across the country who are facing unemployment. That is what I am complaining about.

DEVELOPMENT OF ALBERTA OIL SANDS

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. At a small Liberal meeting held on the weekend in southern Alberta, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce announced that there would be two projects going ahead in northeastern Alberta for the development of the oil sands. Does the Minister know of this new development in his Department and, if so, would he elaborate and tell us where these projects would be developed?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, as I said, there are some negotiations taking place at this time between the industry and the Alberta Government on some projects in Alberta. When we are ready to give more specific information, we will do so. Some announcements might be made quite soon, and others might take some time. Of course the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce knows that the federal Government will do everything possible to make sure that these programs go ahead.

REPORT OF MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. He was reported as saying in Lethbridge, "New life could be breathed into Alberta heavy oil projects within the year." Can that statement be taken seriously, or was the Minister more inclined to be attempting to breath new life into the Liberal Party of Alberta?

If it is the former case, would he indicate where and what number of jobs will be created, as well as indicating what changes are contemplated in the National Energy Program, since that would give some hope to the many industries associated with the oil industry which clearly have their backs against the wall?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, the question that I was responding to when I was in Alberta was about the two megaprojects, Alsands and Cold Lake. We on this side of the House happen to have more confidence in the future of the economy than hon. colleagues on the other side. I indicated that in major capital projects—and I did not mention only megaprojects specifically—which we categorized as over \$100 million, there has been a heightened interest from the principals of many of these projects during the past three or four months.

I and my colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, have had several meetings with the principals of some of these projects who are now rethinking their possibilities. Thus we are very confident that in the future some of these projects which have been postponed because of the international economic situation will be undertaken.

REQUEST FOR FORECAST OF POSSIBLE EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Madam Speaker, surely it is time to separate the fluff from fact. If the Minister has something positive to say about future development, can he tell us how many jobs will be created, where they will be created, and what kind of changes will be made to the National Energy Program so that these projects can go ahead?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, I was just trying to provide a little bright light out there in Alberta because I know some of the MPs from Alberta who sit here in the House are obviously very negative about the economic future of the country. I was just trying to provide some optimism based on the discussions that my colleague the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and I have had.

I am surprised that the Member for Vegreville, who is a former businessman, would want me to indicate in public confidential commercial information discussed between business people and the Government of Canada. I am a little amazed at the Hon. Member's request.

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HOUSING

ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TERMINATION DATE—EFFECT ON NORTHERN AREAS

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for housing. Bearing in mind that a number of new Canadian homebuilders would like to receive the \$3,000 grant for homes, and that the Government's policy is that the footings have to be in the ground before April 30, and since there is still frost in the ground in much of Canada by April 30, how much longer will the Minister continue Southern Canadian policies whereby northern Canadians cannot live with those policies? Is he intending to send the Minister of Agriculture out to speak Chinook on the building sites, or have the Prime Minister wrestle the foundations into the ground?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, I have undertaken to examine this definition of demarkation lines and we are doing so. I hope to come up with a solution. I might say to the Hon. Member that I will not do anything to prevent people from putting in foundations and getting a fair chance, if I can avoid it.