

Oral Questions

are precisely the questions upon which the applicants will have to satisfy the National Energy Board before the board would make any finding regarding the Mackenzie pipeline application, the hearing of which, as the hon. member knows, has not yet commenced.

Mr. Neil: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the pipeline people have submitted proposals to the United States and the U.S. department of the interior on its own has made a study. Does the government plan on doing a study of its own relating to this problem?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the National Energy Board has been constituted to do.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**USE OF NORTHWEST PASSAGE BY UNITED STATES TANKERS—CONSULTATIONS WITH UNITED STATES**

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, which I will direct to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the concern raised by the study, can the minister advise whether or not his department has yet had any kind of consultations with the U.S. state department regarding use of oil tankers in the Northwest Passage?

● (1410)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, consultations on that subject have been going on for quite sometime.

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ENERGY**NATURAL GAS—POSSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT PROMOTING POLAR PIPELINE ROUTE THROUGH MANITOBA**

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Due to the difficulties being experienced with the Mackenzie Valley pipeline route, will the federal government now be concentrating more effort on promoting the polar gasline route through Manitoba, which the participants of Panarctic Oils Limited claim can be ready before the Mackenzie Valley route?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the government of Canada does have an indirect interest in the polar gas route as a 45 per cent shareholder in Panarctic. I really cannot say at this point which of the two pipeline applications will first be completed. We will naturally continue to pursue with Panarctic, because of our interest in having a full assessment of the polar gas route, the possibility of having the study of the Polar gas route go ahead to completion. At this point the government has not taken a preference between one or other of the two possible pipeline routes.

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE—GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO OBTAIN COPY OF UNITED STATES STUDY OF PROPOSAL

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the same minister. Given the probable consequences of the U.S. study on the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, will the minister inform the House whether the government has already or plans to take steps to obtain from the United States the documentation and the final report of the study itself?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, we provided the United States Department of the Interior with the Canadian documents which are in the public area regarding many of the questions dealt with in the report, so there already has been liaison between my department, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the United States concerning that study. Of course, we will be very interested in pursuing with the American authorities any elements which have not been covered by previous discussions. Regarding the energy part of the question, as I have said, there is a distinct responsibility under the National Energy Board Act to examine these very questions the Department of the Interior has been examining.

MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE ENERGY BOARD STUDY WILL BE AS COMPREHENSIVE AS UNITED STATES STUDY

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Given the comprehensiveness of the United States study, which is comprised of 17 volumes in its final form, will the minister assure the House that the Mackenzie study undertaken by the government through the National Energy Board will be at least as comprehensive as that done by the United States?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, that is the authority parliament has given the National Energy Board, and I think we can be confident that the board will examine all of these questions including gas availability, markets, safety and the environment, and that it will discharge its responsibilities in this regard.

MACKENZIE VALLEY PIPELINE—POSSIBILITY OF EXPERTS WHO PREPARED UNITED STATES STUDY APPEARING AS WITNESSES BEFORE BERGER COMMISSION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, given the fact that the United States has already completed its study in terms of this phase of the work—a very comprehensive study—I wonder whether the government would consider facilitating the attendance of a number of experts who prepared that report for the United States study as witnesses before the Berger Commission?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad, as I am sure my colleague would, to hear from Mr. Justice Berger in this regard whether this would be of assistance. I might add that there was, of course, nearly \$50 million expended for studies prepared in relation to the Canadian route, and I think this is possibly one of the reasons it has been