

Mr. Stanfield: That is one element in this development, a coming together to set a framework for federal-provincial relationships.

The second element to be settled was the matter of prices, and the Prime Minister has described to us today what has been done. The price level and the duration of the price at that level are temporary, as he has described them. They comprise a stage in the ongoing process, and I believe that is the proper way to have proceeded.

However, it is not clear whether the other parts of the package are temporary as well or whether in fact they comprise an approach, a strategy or a policy that will carry on regardless of what new price level and duration may be negotiated at a future time. I would hope this could be clarified somewhat by the Prime Minister. I think this is a very significant point.

The revenue arrangements have made provision for the financing of the one price across the country, and have made provision for equalization payments amounting to \$100 million or more. They do not provide money for the federal government to use in terms of new development. If they involve an agreement in principle with the provinces for the use of these moneys through capital funds, which the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has described, through these capital pools, if the provinces are to provide the major investment incentives for future development of petroleum resources in their provinces and if they are to assume this role on a long-term basis, then this in fact seems to represent a new strategy and a significant step in the evolving of a policy. If, on the other hand, it is simply intended to place them in a position to put some funds aside for this purpose in the short term, in that case we would be suspicious that the government has perhaps found a temporary way out for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) who has been in a state of some confusion and concern about this matter as it relates to equalization payments. I hope we will get further clarification on this aspect from the Prime Minister, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) or the Minister of Finance—or possibly the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer).

The third element I wish to mention relates to the importance of this coming together or keeping together of the federal government and the provinces with regard to the further development of future supplies of petroleum. This matter is, of course, of the utmost importance. I want to stress the importance of constant consultation and constant participation in getting this job done, at least within the boundaries of the provinces. I emphasize the importance of participation and the importance of co-operation rather than the ministers talking off the tops of their heads about the rate at which provincial resources should be developed, and doing so without consultation.

With regard to the development of the tar sands, for example, which the Prime Minister touched on, the Minister of Supply and Services says that no policy has been affirmed by the government and so he is free to say whatever he likes, as long as the Prime Minister likes what he says. Some time ago the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said in Washington, I believe, seemingly without any consultation in advance with the government of Alberta, that the pace of the development of

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the tar sands would be moderate because this was in the best interests of Canadians. Obviously the minister believes this is the policy and he labours under the impression that it is his responsibility to propagate it at home and abroad. With no consultation, of course, the Minister of Supply and Services has taken off again and renewed his particular pitch. The Prime Minister apparently does not flinch from this. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, a person whose qualities of restraint are legend, has suffered all of this with the utmost dignity.

An hon. Member: When do you get to the oil agreement?

Mr. Stanfield: Perhaps he believes that he who thumps last will last to thump again.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that it is imperative that the lesson of the coming together in connection with pricing must also be applied to development. Considering what we have heard from different ministers in recent months, it is necessary to emphasize that this area of policy, so far as the federal government is concerned, remains palpably untidy. As the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) would say, it constitutes a mess.

I want to make it very clear, in fairness to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, that I do not lay the responsibility for the absurdities we have witnessed with regard to the rate of development of the tar sands at his doorstep. I think the Prime Minister must accept some responsibility in this area and do something about it. In short, sir, let us heed the lesson which was illustrated yesterday by the coming together in connection with prices and make certain that in the interests of the country we apply this lesson also with regard to the development of our natural resources, particularly the tar sands.

● (1430)

Mr. David Lewis (Ycrk South): Mr. Speaker, in his statement the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) referred to the fact that the government last fall froze the price of oil and introduced the export tax, following, you will remember, demands made by my colleagues and myself for those policies.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: I understand that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) regretted the fact that the federal government took action along those lines. I am convinced that if the federal government had not acted last fall, the agreement reached yesterday might well not have been possible; certainly it would have been too late after prices had gone up.

It goes without saying that an agreement reached by the 11 governments of Canada is a desirable way of arriving at a policy. It serves our federal system better than unilateral action either by the federal or any provincial government.