

northeastern United States ahead of pumping gas to the maritimes—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKay:—which the Prime Minister specifically promised in a speech given to the Halifax Board of Trade on January 25 of this year and which was one of seven specific commitments he announced at that time—the Minister of Labour will remember; he was there—to help the maritimes get immediate access to natural gas? I wonder if the Prime Minister could give the House a bit more information on this apparent anomaly.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I have not been made acquainted with that statement by the governor of Massachusetts, but the House will recall that a few years ago when the then minister of energy, mines and resources, Mr. Gillespie, was proposing the idea of a pipeline, the idea was that it would be built to the Atlantic provinces, and then there could be exports of gas to the United States after it had served the Atlantic provinces.

Mr. MacKay: Madam Speaker, I welcome what appears to be some sort of assurance from the Prime Minister in this respect, and I remind him and make a representation to him that until we get a natural gas pipeline to Atlantic Canada we cannot take advantage of our natural geographic position to have the terminal point for LNG in the Strait of Canso area. Would he please hurry up with his implementation of this specific commitment? I would ask him to reread his speech so that there can be no doubt as to any vagueness, as apparently there is in this commitment made to a surrogate, Gordon Gibson, on the west coast, as brought out by the hon. member for Vancouver South.

• (1450)

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, the decision of the National Energy Board was made public several months ago. My hon. friend knows the reasons why the National Energy Board did not see fit to approve at that time the immediate completion of the pipeline to the maritimes. We have indicated that this was still our preferred position. There is an appeal now before the Energy Board respecting its decision, and I suggest that my hon. friend should wait a few weeks before hearing more about this.

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CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAM
NOT BE DISCONTINUED

Mr. Cyril Keēper (Winnipeg-St. James): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the minister responsible for CMHC. In 1978 the Liberal government made a long-term commitment to municipalities through the community services contri-

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butions program which integrated many important services, such as neighbourhood improvement, sewage treatment facilities and plants for conversion of waste into energy. This program was supposed to be the solution to a host of municipal problems. Recent statements by the minister have contributed to the fear that the program is to be discontinued. Will the minister assure the House that there is no truth to this rumour?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, as I have indicated in conversations with each of the provincial counterparts charged with responsibility in housing, yes, indeed, the government is reviewing this program to see whether it will be continued beyond this year. We are looking at the program because nationally it is a program of some \$250 million which, in essence, is transferred from the federal government through the province to the municipalities. No doubt it assists the municipalities. As a former mayor I know well the advantages of that program. However, the program is under review. Before the year end I hope to have an answer for the provincial ministers and the municipalities. My objective would be, if the program cannot be continued, that some other way be found to assist the municipalities with their objectives.

Mr. Keeper: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same minister. Since the minister is unable to give us a clearcut commitment for the continuation of the program, and he has indicated that some substitute program will be put in its place should the other one be discontinued, can he also assure the House that the specific projects under the existing program will be fully funded to completion?

Mr. Cosgrove: Madam Speaker, on the last point, yes, the programs in place will be funded. The terms of the contract specify that and those commitments will be made. But I did not say that a substitute program would be found; I said that that will be my advice to the government and it is my hope that there will be a program.

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THE CONSTITUTION

REQUEST FOR REFERENCE TO SUPREME COURT OF CANADA TO
TEST LEGALITY OF RESOLUTION

Right-Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister following the reasoning of the Prime Minister in response to my colleague, the hon. member for St. John's East. Since the Prime Minister is so sure of the legality of his government's position on the constitutional resolution now before the House of Commons, I wonder whether the Prime Minister, following the advice he gave through the hon. member for St. John's East to the government of Newfoundland, would be prepared to make a reference of that matter to the Supreme Court of Canada to see if the Supreme Court of Canada agrees with the Prime Minister that this resolution is entirely within the competence of the Government of Canada, or whether the Supreme Court

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of Canada will disagree with the Prime Minister, as it did in the case of Bill C-60?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is not only mixing apples and oranges, he is throwing bananas into it too.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cossitt: You are throwing baloney.

Mr. Trudeau: The Leader of the Opposition will recall that in the case of Bill C-60 the reference was on section 91 of the constitution, something that is in there now—

Mr. Crosbie: Sour grapes.

Mr. Trudeau:—and the Supreme Court was judging whether or not under section 91 the federal government had certain powers.

Mr. Beatty: They said that you were wrong.

Mr. Trudeau: The courts always say that one party is wrong and the other is right. In the case of the offshore it is the same thing. There is a division of power between the federal and provincial governments. It is a matter for the courts to say whether that power lies in the federal government or in the provinces.

Mr. Haatshyn: What about patriation?

Mr. Trudeau: The matter of patriation is a matter for the House of Commons. It is before the House of Commons now because there is no provision in the constitution for patriation and there is nothing for the courts to judge upon.

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, in the middle of all of the baloney and bananas we have received from the Prime Minister, I did not note a response to my question. My question is: will the Government of Canada agree to a reference as to the constitutionality of the action they are proposing in the resolution that is now before the House of Commons?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I answered the preamble which was baloney and bananas. As to the question itself, I want to see the House study this matter. Then once it is adopted, of course, any citizen or any province can refer the matter to the courts if it so decides. But it is not the intention of the government to ask the courts to decide upon a matter which Parliament itself has before it.

Mr. Crosbie: You are unreliable.

REQUEST FOR GUARANTEE RESPECTING HERITAGE CULTURE

Mr. Jesse P. Flis (Parkdale-High Park): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Many

ethno-cultural groups in Canada are expressing concern that their heritage language and culture will not be protected by the proposed resolution respecting the Constitution of Canada. This fear was expressed by delegates attending two conventions this weekend, the Ukrainian-Canadian Congress conference in Winnipeg and the delegates attending the Canadian Polish Congress convention in Ottawa. Because of these concerns, would the Prime Minister please clarify whether section 22 or some other section of the proposed resolution does in fact guarantee these Canadians the preservation and further development of their heritage culture, which of course includes their heritage language?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the intention was to address that question in the preamble, and I refer the hon. member to the preamble we submitted to the provinces last June. Unfortunately, the provinces have refused to accept that preamble, and since—

An hon. Member: Oh.

Mr. Trudeau: They have preferred to present to me a preamble which was closer to the wording of the Premier of Quebec, who wanted the idea of self-determination to be included, and of course we could not accept that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

POSSIBLE REFERENCE OF PATRIATION QUESTION TO SUPREME COURT OF CANADA

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. I think that it was on May 28, 1946, that the Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent said, and I quote:

There are other matters given by the act to the jurisdiction of the provincial legislatures and the provincial governments; with respect to any of those it is my view that it would not be possible to deal with them without the consent of those to whose jurisdiction they have been confided.

Madam Speaker, I would like to know whether the Prime Minister is prepared to refer to the Supreme Court of Canada the unilateral patriation of the constitution?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I answered the second question of the hon. member a moment ago when speaking to the Leader of the Official Opposition. As for the first part of the question, it seems to me that the member must be quoting what Mr. St. Laurent said when the first paragraph of section 91 was amended. He was then saying that some matters were outside federal jurisdiction when it wanted to amend its own constitution. The distribution of powers indeed appear in the first paragraph of section 91. I would like to point out that we do not alter the distribution of powers between the federal and provincial governments in the resolution now under consideration. We do not alter what Mr.

St. Laurent said, that is, that the distribution of powers could not be affected by a federal amendment.

Mr. Kilgour: Madam Speaker, I should like to ask a supplementary question.

It is very clear to me that the project aims at reducing the power of the provinces over some matters such as language rights. In my opinion, the powers of the provinces will clearly be changed by this resolution. Does the Prime Minister agree? If not, could these matters be referred to the Supreme Court of Canada?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I have just given the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition a negative answer to the same question.

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● (1500)

[English]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES COMMISSIONER

EXPENDITURE ON LANGUAGE GAMES FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

Mr. John Gamble (York North): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. I wonder if the minister could tell the House whether, contrary to general public belief, the consolidated revenue fund is suffering from an overabundance of surplus.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Not yet, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Gamble: In light of that rather terse but succinct answer, I ask the minister whether the expenditure just recently incurred by Maxwell Yalden, Commissioner of Official Languages, of \$1,360,000 in purchasing 200,000 Parker Brothers quality language games for free distribution is an appropriate expenditure of public funds and, if so, where Mr. Yalden acquired the authority, under the Official Languages Act, for that kind of expenditure.

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, I remind the hon. member that, as I understand it, Mr. Yalden as the Official Languages Commissioner is an officer of the House of Commons and therefore any member of the House or a parliamentary committee would not only be entitled, but would be obligated, to question Mr. Yalden on the reasons for spending such sums of money, just as members can question the Chief Electoral Officer or other persons who are directly responsible to Parliament and not to the government.

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[Translation]

ENERGY

POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTION OF LNG STORAGE FACILITIES

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Last summer, Petro-Canada announced the construction of large LNG storage facilities. It would appear that consultant firms have chosen two sites: Gros-Cacouna and Canso in Newfoundland. Can the Minister advise us as to the progress of these studies and, if so, when does he expect Petro-Canada or himself to make a definite announcement?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): First of all, Madam Speaker, I want to remind the hon. member for Joliette that Canso is in Nova Scotia and not in Newfoundland as he indicated. Secondly, Petro-Canada has not announced a decision regarding this project. Rather, it announced a pilot project for the shipment of natural gas from the Arctic to southern Canada. This project will be submitted for consideration to the National Energy Board which will decide whether or not it should be retained. In its submission to the NEB, Petro-Canada proposed two sites, Gros-Cacouna in Quebec and Canso, in the Strait of Canso in Nova Scotia. This question will also be considered by the NEB which will make a decision that will be made public and will be subject to government approval if indeed there is to be an export of gas from Canada. In the meantime, I think we must let Petro-Canada proceed with the necessary studies on the matter and let the National Energy Board do its work. That is all the information I have on the subject for now. As I indicated, the decision at this point is up to Petro-Canada and the National Energy Board.

Mr. La Salle: Madam Speaker, since Canso is in Nova Scotia, and also in the constituency of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance if I am not mistaken, can I have the assurance that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, as a Quebecker, will have as much influence as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance on the choice of a location?

Mr. Lalonde: Madam Speaker, every citizen is entitled to be heard by the National Energy Board. However, it would be rather unusual for me as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to make representations to the National Energy Board or to exert any kind of pressures on the board. Indeed, neither myself nor my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, intend to do any such thing. I am certain that the decision will be made in light of what is economically the wisest for Petro-Canada and Canada as a whole. I wish to assure my hon. colleague that this decision will eventually be made in the interest of all Canadians, including Quebeckers.