

So, Mr. Chairman, without trespassing any further on the time of the committee, may I say I hope the minister will use this opportunity to clarify the contradictions and to end the schizophrenia that has caused untold damage to the economy of Canada. The problem of chronic unemployment, or under-employment if you like, is directly related to the confused state of our economy. We have a resource potential which could be used for a magnificent economic development if the government had the wisdom, initiative and courage to co-ordinate its policies in this regard. A reorganization of the kind outlined in Part II of Bill C-207 is merely a musical chairs gesture unless it is backed by strong coordinated policy statements on the part of the government. I hope the hon. gentleman, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources will use the energy at his disposal this afternoon to place on the record a definitive statement concerning government policy and plans in this regard. We are approaching a weekend, and such a statement would receive good coverage in the press. I am sure it would end the anxiety expressed by people in all walks of life, from bankers and financial leaders down to the hundreds of thousands of unemployed Canadians who are waiting for government leadership to resolve their economic problems.

Mr. Thomson: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make some remarks in a somewhat similar vein to those we have heard today in respect of the problems related to energy in Canada, and particularly some of the resources we have. When I look at the answers the government has given to the questions regarding oil or atomic energy in the past few months, I am reminded of a story during the Boer War when things were not going very well for the British. One government member was heard to say, "I suppose we will wander through somehow". That is how it would seem the present government hopes to solve the energy crisis, unless it adopts a better attitude than it has had in the past few months. I suggest it is not worthy of the minister or the government to take such an approach. Surely, they can make some decisions and recommendations in this area, and present something to us which we can discuss.

I think one of the attributes of a good government is the ability to anticipate the problems which might develop in a country, what might be needed in the way of energy or something else, and come forward with some firm recommendations concerning what should be done about them. I feel in this regard the present government has been sadly lacking. I believe it is fairly obvious that the United States has oil in Alaska which they will get to market somehow, and that we have some oil in our Arctic which we will get to market somehow. During the meetings the minister held with the oil company presidents this week, I wonder whether he was able to present a constructive proposal to them. For example, was he able to say on behalf of the government that the research has been done in respect of preservation of the ecology? In connection with the building of any pipeline, was he able to say we have done some research into the practical problem of building and operating a gas or oil pipeline

through the permafrost? I wonder if he was able to make these statements.

I would like to know also whether the minister was able to say a comprehensive study had been made of a route for a Canadian pipeline or pipelines through the Mackenzie Valley or at any other location. I would like to know if he was able to talk in an intelligent fashion about this proposal with these people. Was he able to suggest what type of business organization should operate any such pipeline which followed a Canadian route? I wonder whether he had ideas to present to these people or whether he was stumbling in the dark. Certainly, I feel he should have been able to do so because it is some time since the oil was discovered and, therefore, he must have been aware that something would have to be done. If he was not thinking about it, then his officials should have been.

We have been told it is all very well to be critical but that one should have some practical suggestions. I should like to make some practical suggestions to the minister. I believe it is obvious that if such a pipeline were built, the oil which would flow through it in the immediate future would be mostly United States oil. Hopefully, there would be some Canadian oil. Obviously, there would have to be some United States money used in the building of any such pipeline. As Canadians, we have an interest in this pipeline and the type of organization that would construct and operate it. I suggest the most logical type of organization would be a Panarctic type organization through which we would use both Canadian money, expertise and control and United States money. In effect, it would be a joint effort. I suggest to the minister, without going into great detail, it would seem logical that a realistic approach to the problem would involve the resources of the two countries. I think this is a practical suggestion.

I should like to switch for a moment to atomic energy because I feel here we have a problem which is somewhat similar to the problem in respect of oil. Once again the minister seems to have been stumbling from atom to atom or from molecule to molecule. He does not seem to be able to make up his mind and seems to be concerning himself mainly with whether or not we can sell an atomic plant abroad and what we should build in Canada. I certainly believe his officials should be able to give him better advice. I hope some firm recommendations will be forthcoming along this line. I realize we do not have all the answers in respect of atomic energy. I realize also that the technology required in a field of this nature is pretty extensive and has not been developed in all countries. In answer to a question I asked this morning, the minister suggested we did not have all the technology necessary to build an enrichment plant in Canada.

● (2:40 p.m.)

I ask him directly, did he make a request of the United States government to make their technology available if we wanted to build an enrichment plant in Canada. Has he offered to put any money into a Japanese experiment,