

implicit in the report, it was a conclusion against the establishment of a publicly-owned national petroleum corporation.

The Prime Minister cannot get away with that statement. Nobody in Canada will believe anything other than that the NDP in this Parliament proposed sensible, positive solutions to some of our problems and that the government of this country, anxious to remain in office, accepted those solutions. I do not know whether the frustration felt by some people is real, or is put on for the purpose of showing strong activity or belligerence. But in either case I suggest, sir, that the frustration apparently felt or simulated by certain members of the House is understandable. I suggest to you that no objective observer of this parliament could fail to recognize the important influence which our party has exercised in important areas of policy. Making this parliament work has been of immense value to Canada and to Canadians.

● (1610)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lewis:** I know there are some people in this House and in the country who think the only role for an opposition is to oppose—recklessly, negatively and destructively. I have always rejected that idea in theory, and I reject it particularly in the case of a minority parliament. I reject this negative, destructive approach. In fact, the only kind of opposition in this sort of parliament which makes any sense from the viewpoint of the interest of Canada is a constructive and positive kind. I say that the Prime Minister's statement last Thursday was dramatic evidence of the value to Canadians of such a policy of making positive suggestions, and, by the nature of the present parliament, having them adopted even though only in part. This is what has been done since January 4, and this is what has been of value to the country.

We are under no illusions that Canada has yet what we would call an adequate petroleum policy, let alone an adequate energy policy. We know perfectly well that as a result of the behaviour of the federal Conservative and Liberal governments, and of the Social Credit and Conservative governments of Alberta in particular, our resources of oil and gas have been sold out to the multinational corporations, with the result that it is the corporations which have been allowed to set priorities, dominate the oil supply situation and manipulate prices. And as long as the multinationals continue to play a dominant role in the production and distribution of Canada's energy supplies, so long will we continue to lack an adequate energy policy.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lewis:** I say there is absolutely no excuse for allowing the multinationals to increase their prices for domestically-produced oil after January 31, and indeed, after March 31, or, indeed, at any time when Canadians use Canadian oil produced without an increase in the cost of production. I say to the Prime Minister no matter how strong the pressures from the corporations or from certain short-sighted provinces, the government, this parliament and the people of Canada must insist that the oil and gas resources which belong to the people should be available at reasonable prices, and that those prices should not be

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increased unless such an increase is justified by an increase in the cost of production. I really cannot understand why certain members of this House, for whose personal decency I have very great respect, are opposing the continuation of the price freeze after January 31 and, by doing so, are demanding that the multinational corporations be given an opportunity to make hundreds of millions of dollars in windfall profits—profits which they do not need and do not deserve.

I remind hon. members that the corporations have already this year received an increase per barrel of 95 cents. This means billions of dollars added to the value of their reserves, not to speak of hundreds of billions added to their profits. Already, in the first nine months of 1973, Imperial Oil has shown increased profits, as compared with the same period of 1972, amounting to 46 per cent. The increase of Gulf's profits amounts to 45 per cent. How much more are they to be entitled to gouge out of the Canadian people to fill their private coffers? And remember that 86 per cent of those profits do not remain in this country but go south to the parent corporations of these multinational firms.

We insist, therefore, that the decision to continue the price freeze is right, and that it deserves the support of all Canadians who have in mind the welfare of their country and who are not misled into seeking to defend the power and the profits of the multinational corporations.

I want to say that in my view the setting up of a publicly-owned national petroleum corporation is long overdue. The Prime Minister went out of his way to emphasize that he did not intend to interfere with the private sector and that Canada would continue to welcome foreign investment. I want to say on behalf of my colleagues that, as far as our policy is concerned and as far as the interests of Canada are concerned, we believe the time has come for massive public intervention in the petroleum industry of Canada. The time for action to curb the power of the multinational corporations in this country is overdue. This is why we are so anxious about the way in which Canada's tar sands are to be developed. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that Canadians ought to learn a lesson from what happened 12 to 15 years ago, when various governments sold out our conventional oil resources to the multinational corporations. The government in existence in 1961—it happened to be a Tory government—not only acquiesced in the sell-out, but accepted the wishes of the corporations and divided Canada into two markets and began the policy which has now resulted in difficulties for Quebec and the Atlantic provinces about which the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) spoke so eloquently this afternoon.

I suggest to you, sir, that Canadians, members of this House, and, particularly, the Government of Canada ought to learn a lesson from what has happened as a result of selling out our conventional energy sources to the corporations. Having been in their power, under their domination as to supply and price for all these years, and seeing, now, the consequences of that situation, we ought to determine as a nation that the new and large oil reserves to be found in the tar sands are developed as a public utility under public control and massive public ownership for the benefit of Canadians.