

Oil and Petroleum

five-year period in respect of escalating prices for oil and natural gas. Is that correct?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): No. It would involve phasing the price of natural gas to the price of oil in Canada as it may be determined at the time. The value of gas would be a commodity value based on the price of oil. We have proposed a five-year period in respect of the escalation in the price of gas. In fact the price of oil may be higher or lower, but the period we have proposed is five years in an attempt to restrain the impact as the price goes up.

Mr. Symes: Has the five-year period been agreed to by the resource producing provinces?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): We have put the proposal forward to both the producing and consuming sides, but up to the moment it has not been agreed to by anyone.

Mr. Mitges: Mr. Chairman, I am glad to have an opportunity to take part in this debate on Bill C-32 respecting the administration of interprovincial, export and import trade in petroleum and petroleum products. After reviewing and studying the debates on this bill up to now, and after assessing the pros and cons of what has already been stated by various speakers on both sides of the House, I find it would be most difficult on my part to contribute to this debate and focus attention on any pertinent information that has not already been brought out by previous contributors to the debate. Therefore, I should like to direct the content of my remarks to perhaps a slightly different angle or approach.

As a member from Ontario, I feel we in Ontario have been caught in the middle of a continual harangue and bitter confrontation that has been going on at an ever increasing pace between the fuel producing provinces of Canada and the federal government. Ontario is a province which, by virtue of its vast industrial and commercial make-up, plus its large and extensive population, requires a great deal of energy to keep its furnaces alight and to guarantee the continuation of the many hundreds of thousands of jobs necessary to keep our economy bright. Yet, with all this, we are the most vulnerable of all provinces in so far as energy is concerned and we are obliged to recognize that our role is less than that of an innocent bystander at a boxing match.

I would humbly suggest that the people of Canada have "had it", they are fed up with this fruitless dialogue they have had to digest, and now demand a quick end to this charade so they will know soon where all Canadians stand and what to expect in the future, in order that we can begin to prepare ourselves as soon as possible for all the eventualities that might present themselves. The time is now ripe for both sides to bury the hatchet and start once again from scratch. The time is ripe for a new spirit of negotiation and consultation with some plain give and take by both sides. This is of tantamount importance if we are ever to solve this unfortunate but important problem.

Bargaining in a spirit of good will, honesty and good faith, rather than bargaining for political advantage, as I have observed, would indeed go a long way toward resolving the difficulties. Let us make sure we do not find ourselves, as many school boards and teachers in our province have unfortunately found themselves, involved

in the constant bickering and confrontation which has been evidenced lately with both sides of the Ontario school educational system superimposing their own philosophies at the expense of each other, completely forgetting the innocent bystander, in this case the student, who is the ultimate loser as a result of the never ending dispute.

Likewise, Mr. Chairman, in this energy debacle involving the producing provinces and the federal government, the eventual losers will be the innocent bystanders, in this case the Canadian people, unless something is done, and done soon. I think it is mandatory that we end this confrontation and replace it by honest bargaining, in good faith, by all parties, that would be beneficial to all sides concerned and, above all, of lasting benefit to the people of Canada. This would be a most welcome factor in furthering the cause of national unity, a cause which needs the most careful cultivation and nurturing to ensure the moulding of all regions of Canada into a truly national entity in which we can all take pride and of which we can all be proud.

● (1630)

Miss MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Chairman, the government has been actively trying to promote the myth that the bill which we have before us, and the budget bills relating to federal taxation of royalties, are issues which concern only the producing provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and the federal government. Many members from western Canada have already spoken in this debate. But I speak on behalf of a constituency in Ontario because this bill poses a threat, not just to the prairie provinces but to all the provinces which must be wondering what resource area the federal government will try to take over next, and to all Canadian consumers whose supplies of oil and natural gas depend so heavily on successful federal-provincial co-operation in this area.

Behind this bill there is a fundamental lack of coherent energy policy in this country. In the formation of energy policy, where intelligent initiative and long-range planning are called for, we have seen nothing but reflex reaction. This bill is just one more example of legislation by reaction. It does nothing to provide an integrated, over-all energy policy to co-ordinate the development and delivery of our natural resources in the most efficient and rational way. Instead, by proposing unilateral action to set oil prices, an action which invades provincial jurisdiction, it introduces division and friction to an area where cohesion and co-operation are desperately needed.

Until we have a coherent national energy policy, each piece of the government's legislation can only be disruptive, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle forced into a frame by someone, without any idea of the over-all picture behind the puzzle. The government unfortunately needs to be reminded of the obvious. In particular, it needs to be reminded that any energy policy is justified only if it makes the best possible contribution to the quality of life in Canada. The only exception to this might be whatever contribution we make to the poorer nations of the world. All other policies must contribute to the strength, unity and self-reliance of our nation. They must create communities that are varied, healthy, secure and stimulating.