

Petroleum Incentives Program Act

● (1920)

This Canadian ownership rate program and the petroleum incentives program are ways in which the government goes about promoting Canadianization. It will provide grants to companies based on the degree of Canadian ownership, but the real motive of the programs is to put the bureaucrats from Tunney's Pasture in direct "hands on" control of what is going on.

If someone has to come to an official with an application form and ask for approval in order to get some money so that he can stay in business, then he is someone whose political behaviour can be predicted and controlled. Once people have to go to Mr. Edmund Clark or Mr. Mickey Cohen and beg for grants so that they can proceed, we know darn well that they can no longer publicly criticize the policies written by Mr. Ed Clark and Mr. Mickey Cohen. That is a nice state of affairs if you do not believe in democracy and it is a nice state of affairs if you do believe in Big Brother and in manipulation. The government that spends \$70 million on advertising obviously believes in all that.

If that sounds unfair in terms of characterization, Mr. Speaker, I should like to remind the House of a speech made by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in Sherbrooke, Quebec, on October 22, 1981, when he said that a greater threat to Canadian unity than nationalism is the growing wealth in Alberta; that the threat is real and that it is necessary that we show our teeth. That is what the minister said, and it is an incredible statement. With his chosen few, the pointy headed bureaucrats in charge of that industry and that wealth, perhaps he can prevent the threat from harming the country.

What has been produced, Mr. Speaker? The result is absolutely incredible. There are 27 clauses in the bill which deal with Canadian ownership and determination, and they are all very complicated. Then there are guidelines about how the act is to be interpreted. There are guidelines respecting the effect of informal equity in the measurement of Canadian ownership rights. There are nine pages and 14 clauses of these guidelines. Clause 13 provides that the review requirement and measurement responsibilities of an applicant for the purposes of the consideration of informal equity will be subject to the general audit provisions of the proposed COCD act. You would need to be a Philadelphia lawyer to understand this, Mr. Speaker. Then there is the Canadian ownership and control determination regulations which consist of 53 pages and 44 clauses. Clause 43 provides as follows:

—for purposes of the first application or an amended application filed in substantial compliance with the act and regulations in the first year after the act comes into force, a trust that is a primary investor that does not own a large block of any publicly traded class of formal equity or does not own half of one per cent or greater of any other class of formal equity may elect that its Canadian ownership rate shall be—

A Philadelphia lawyer might be able to help with that one.

Then there are the interpretation notes for the Canadian ownership and control determination act, and the meaning of Canadian control status for partnerships, consisting of eight pages and 17 clauses. Then there are the interpretation notes

for the Canadian ownership and control determination act, and the meaning of Canadian control status for corporations, consisting of eight pages and 21 clauses. Then there is the Canadian ownership and control determination act guide to application forms, which consists of 68 pages and 65 clauses. Then there are the Canadian ownership control and determination act forms. There are only 26 different forms to be filled out. Then there are assorted other minor documents that have to be filled out in order to get a Canadian ownership rating.

I would remind you, Mr. Speaker, that this material is produced by a government that actually has among its agencies an office for the reduction of the paperwork burden. It actually claims that it is in favour of reducing the paper work burden. It actually claims that it is in favour of deregulation. The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) has an agency which every month or so sends me a newsletter about the wonderful things the deregulation agency is doing for us. What was it doing when these yahoos produced this mess? To try to help people through this mess, the government has been holding seminars throughout the country and has invited lawyers, accountants, geologists, engineers and others to appear.

I spoke to an oilman who attended one of these seminars. He sat for two days then walked out saying, "There ain't no way! I will move my operations to the United States. There is absolutely no way I am going to get tangled up with this lousy mess. What would happen is that instead of looking for oil and gas, which is the business of the oil and gas industry, I would be filling out forms." He said that if he had wanted to be a lawyer or an accountant rather than an oilman, he would have been a lawyer or an accountant, but that he wanted to find oil and gas. What did the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources give him to help him do that? He gave him forms to fill out. Of course the minister is a lawyer, so his own profession has done very well out of this.

That is only the half of it, Mr. Speaker. You have to comply with the Canadian ownership regulations by filling out 26 forms and going through the incredible array of regulations, clauses and so on. Then, if you want to apply for a PIPs grant, you read the 34 clauses, 16 pages of the petroleum incentives programs act and the regulations that flow from it. Like all legislation it has clauses which say "and the minister shall do whatever he wants" by way of regulation. There are 44 clauses and 71 pages with how many schedules and how many forms attached at the end? I cannot count them all. It takes 21 different forms to get a PIP grant. If you are confused about how to fill out the forms, they have a handy-dandy guide which makes the income tax guide look like child's play. This from a government which says it believes in reducing the paperwork burden, to simplify things. I sincerely hope the program works, Mr. Speaker, but in all honesty you have to conclude it is going to collapse as a result of the paperwork. This program is one of those marvelous academic schemes dreamed up by those brilliant people over at Tunney's Pasture, but unfortunately it is just not going to work. I have talked to a