

*Canada Oil and Gas Act*

wants will be put into effect. As bad as the present Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro) might be, I would have a greater degree of confidence in him than I would in government by the chief executive officer of Petro-Canada.

These are some of the reasons northerners are very suspicious of Petro-Canada and treat it as something rather different from other oil companies. We do not have the same problems with Esso, Gulf, BP and all these other companies because they are subject to rule and regulation as laid down by government. People generally believe that when an issue is at stake they will carefully examine the different points of view and those things which are required both by the oil and gas companies, on the one hand, and the general population of the territories on the other. When it comes to Petro-Canada we strongly suspect we will not have a fair hearing.

We can cite as an example of this suspicion of Petro-Canada, the way in which it does operate and might operate in the future, what happened at Fort Good Hope just last summer where Petro-Canada virtually got run out of town.

As an example of how governments might bend the rules to suit one of its Crown agencies, I like to look at the Peace River dam in British Columbia. This is a provincial matter, not a federal one. I understand there were pretty tough rules and regulations laid down by the government of British Columbia concerning the way in which the timber had to be removed and utilized in areas which were to be flooded. The construction of the Peace River dam was behind schedule. It was to flood quite an area and this area had not been logged out. My understanding of what happened there is that B.C. Hydro was told to proceed with flooding that area without the completion of the logging operations. As a result you can go there today and see this half-drowned, decaying timber which should have been cleared. Presumably the people in charge of forest regulations were told not to do anything or say anything about this, just to let things go ahead because that was the provincial priority. I can see the same thing happening in the territories with Petro-Canada, where things will be done because of national priority, with the rules and regulations allowed to slide, not enforced, and the people who live there could suffer considerably.

I have some difficulty and fears also in trying to determine where the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is going to fit into the picture. Progressively over the last few years the Parliament of Canada, the House of Commons and the Senate, have been giving more and more power to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. I do not wish to refer to the incumbent in that office at the present time. If you look at what happened in this respect with a particular Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce some 30 years ago, in the 1950s, the late C. D. Howe, you will see that although Mr. Howe was undoubtedly in many respects a great Canadian, with more and more power going to his department and to him as an individual, this was seen by Canadians as a whole as not to be desirable.

I think the same thing is happening with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. He may be a great Canadian, but I do not think it is incumbent upon us to hand over any more power to any one individual, however competent he may or may not be.

I am at the stage of conclusion now, Mr. Speaker.

**An hon. Member:** You had longer than you thought.

**Mr. Nickerson:** Yes, I have a little bit longer than I originally anticipated, but it is a good speech, you have to admit.

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

**Mr. Nickerson:** If we look at what I have cited as the worst example of colonial exploitation, the British East India Company operating in the eighteenth century, and at people like Warren Hastings who just went a bit too far even for that particular period and ended up being impeached by another Parliament, you will understand why I am concerned that our Canadian Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources might in future become the Warren Hastings of the north. I suggest that is something we have very carefully to consider. We have to make sure in our legislation that the present incumbent in that position, or any future Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, does not become the Warren Hastings of the north.

Thank you kindly for all your attention.

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** Mr. Speaker, this debate has been fairly extensive, but how could you expect anything else? This bill produced about 150 government amendments at the committee stage. I have been looking through the reprinted form; and I think the even much bigger Bank Act bill, with which I had a very intimate connection over the past year, saw fewer amendments. This would indicate that perhaps the committee members were tough and the government had to bring in amendments. On the other hand, it may mean that it was such a sloppily prepared bill that the government quickly had to try to repair whatever holes it found. I think, like my colleague, the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre), that this is such a thoroughly bad bill—and we have seen many—that, quite frankly the drafters of it should go right back to the drawing board and start out from square one.

In addition to that, we are faced with some 50-odd private amendments. That too bespeaks a very contentious bill. Clause 28 is a very innocuous looking little clause, but it means ultimately, what I would put as a simile, that the Government of Canada is taking the Canada lands, that is the Northwest Territories and the Yukon and whatever offshore interests it can claim ultimately, and is wiring it up and piping it up as a dairy barn. There it proposes to take the petroleum resources of that vast area, by far the largest part of Canada, and through the pipes effectively take the production of three teats of the cow.