

Canada Oil and Gas Act

recently for Canada? Let us look at the track record. How is the Post Office doing lately, or the armed forces? What about the state of our national economy, with interest rates at the level they have reached, the high cost of food and housing and the \$20 billion projected federal deficit for the present fiscal year alone? What about the futile constitutional farce, the DREE farce and the CRTC farce, and what about the disaster of VIA Rail and the mismanagement of our transportation systems in western Canada? Look at their cynical, distrustful attitude with regard to the role of the private sector, in particular with respect to development on Canada lands. At the same time, the feds continue to amass windfall profits by ripping off Canadians through usurious levels of taxation.

Look at the basic disaster of the National Energy Program. Look at the drilling rigs flooding out of Canada, wells being capped, jobs being lost in all parts of this nation and major energy projects collapsing before our very eyes because of the incompetence of this government. How can the federal government possibly claim that it is the single, all-knowing, competent agency for managing our offshore minerals and hydrocarbon resources?

I sat through many weeks and months of committee deliberations trying to get information from federal experts who were there on behalf of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde), and I was sorely disappointed to find that all those experts were there to do was to protect their minister and his political mission in life. They would not provide information, and, I hazard to say, they are not capable of providing that information. In fact, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro), who has operative authority over 85 per cent of these Canada lands, did not appear at the committee more than once or twice during the whole four-month period of deliberations. It is not a widely known fact but it is certainly reflected in the bill, that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has jurisdiction over all decisions regarding exploration agreements and development permits above the 60th parallel. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is apparently trying to expropriate that authority from the native peoples, as well as their trust in the minister.

How can these centralists be so cynical as to deny that our regional governments have certain expertise and knowledge peculiar to their areas which federal policymakers cannot possibly experience or comprehend?

Yes, I predict that before long the regions of Canada will mount a massive strike against these arrogant, power hungry masochists who are wreckling our national economy. They will stop producing oil, as Alberta has done. They will stop using the Post Office. They will close up their businesses, as they are doing at the present time, and refuse to pay income tax. They will stop buying Canada Savings Bonds, as Canadians are already doing in record numbers, and they will abandon their mortgages.

• (1750)

This strike against the central government, Mr. Speaker, is where we are headed if we allow these insane policies, spearheaded by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) and the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), to continue to destroy our beloved nation.

On the question of resource ownership, particularly offshore resources, it is a fact that since the adoption of the BNA Act, ownership of natural resources has been entrusted to the provinces. These resources are the basis for building local economies, for development of communities, and for financing opportunities, employment and services to people living in those sparsely populated, far-flung regions of Canada. To build a future, Mr. Speaker, the people of those areas were granted in 1867 the right to elect their own regional governments, and to pursue their own heritage within a great country.

Why were the provinces given all these powers under the various sections of the BNA Act? Why were they given the power over education, land title and property, hospital and medical care, mining minerals, timber and royalties? Why were they given the power over business, their licencing, and incorporation, over provincial justice, and generally over all matters of a local or provincial nature? They were given that authority because the wisdom of another age saw that those kinds of decisions had to be made close to the people. They could not be gathered together and expropriated to a federal government 2,000 miles away from most of these far flung regions.

So the provisions of the BNA Act affirm the federal nature of our political institutions; the "dignifying", if you like, of the regions; giving those regions some cause for aspiring and hoping that they might emerge as individual and unique entities within the rich fabric of this nation. Therefore, the federal government has no right to change this concept now.

Conversely, Mr. Speaker, the maritime regions have every right to those resources which they brought with them into Confederation, to the same degree that Ontario and Quebec have profited by their resources and have annexed vast tracts of additional land in this century which have brought them great prosperity. The province of Quebec annexed 379,000 square miles in 1912, virtually tripling the land mass of Quebec. The province of Ontario added 237,000 square miles in the north and western regions of the province, with federal consent, virtually tripling its area merely to fuel the necessities and provide for the essentials in developing the local economies in those two great regions. Ever since the first potash was produced in the Ottawa Valley by your ancestors, and perhaps some of ours, for use in the production of soaps, waxes and other important products, and ever since the first hydro electric station was established by Sir Adam Beck on the Niagara River, Ontario has been free to develop and own its resources without federal interference.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a number of legal precedents to the provinces' case with regard to ownership of offshore resources on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. We have the