

Canada Oil and Gas Act

Mrs. Erola: Mr. Speaker, I should like to return to the subject of the law of the sea to which the hon. member referred. If the resources at the bottom of the high seas which, if we follow the law of the sea treaty, are to be shared by all humanity or all people in the world, does it not follow that those resources which are at the bottom of the sea within Canadian jurisdiction should be shared by all Canadians?

Mr. Siddon: Who said that they would not be?

Mr. Roche: Mr. Speaker, I thought I dealt with that question when I emphasized what the hon. member for St. John's East said earlier in the day. It is the intention of the province for which he spoke to enter into a spirit of sharing with the rest of Canada. In the law of the sea the minerals at the bottom of the ocean in the high seas ought clearly to be put under the jurisdiction of an international institution because they do not belong to anybody out in the high seas. The revenue from that ought to be shared on an equitable basis, particularly with land blocked and geographically disadvantaged states. Those minerals which will subsequently be developed at the bottom of the sea on the coastal areas of Canada belong to Canada—

Mrs. Erola: That is right.

Mr. Roche: —but we will enter into a revenue-sharing formula. This revenue-sharing formula will be arrived at by the concurrence of the provinces which have the actual ownership. I believe that is what makes Canada.

In conclusion, the hon. minister is reflecting her reaction to my answer on the question of the unitary concept of Canada that we are opposing. We are saying that Canada is composed of a confederation in which the policies of our government, of our national stance, are arrived at jointly by the federal and the provincial governments. Certainly this will come into play in the revenue sharing concept of the minerals at the bottom of the sea on the coastal areas of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I was about to recognize the hon. member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington), but I must look to my right at this point and recognize the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. MacLaren).

Mr. Roy MacLaren (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, during the course of our discussion today on the amendment advanced by the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) we have heard some discussion of the questions about oil supply in Canada and of the broad question of meeting our oil needs at the end of this decade. We have also heard another principal theme in our discussion, namely, the more legalistic question of ownership of offshore resources, whether they be on the Atlantic coast, on the Pacific coast, or in the Arctic regions.

Let me attempt for a moment to comment on the first of those two major themes in our discussion on the question of the exploitation of resources on Canada lands. The suggestion was made this afternoon and this evening that this legislation would somehow act as a hindrance to the achievement by

Canada of the goal of self-sufficiency in the petroleum field. In fact, there is no evidence to substantiate such an allegation. On the contrary, there is ample evidence, some of which I should like to cite for the benefit of the House, that the very opposite is true. One broad purpose of the National Energy Program is to ensure that Canadians enjoy self-sufficiency in oil, as they already do in hydro-electricity, coal, uranium and natural gas, by the end of this decade. In the evaluation of our potential supply it is obvious that the offshore resources on the east coast, which have now largely been outlined, and those in the Arctic which are on the way to being determined, will play a significant part in the provision of self-sufficiency in oil for all Canadians. That exploration, that exciting new development in Canada's energy future will, in part, come about as a result of the incentives which have been provided in the past and which will be provided increasingly in the future for Canadian-controlled companies to bring those resources to the benefit of all Canadians.

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We have seen the example of Dome Petroleum with its ambitious schemes in the Beaufort Sea, schemes which also involve a degree of Canadianization which hitherto were not present. We know of the NOVA corporation's commitments in the Canada lands. As indicative, indeed, of many other arrangements, we have seen the arrangements between Shell and Norcen. We have seen the participation of a number of smaller Canadian companies, and I wish to note in particular their participation in the offshore exploration where they were not present in the past. Indeed, it would be an unusual week when the readers of at least the financial pages of our newspapers were not to note some new commitment by petroleum companies, particularly Canadian companies, to participate in the exploration and development in the Canada lands. I would submit that, in fact, the regime which is set forth in Bill C-48 does not in any way hinder or discourage the development which we all seek. On the contrary, it provides a framework in which that exploration and development can proceed.

Members of the House may recall that some years ago Bill C-20 offered a new regime to replace the existing somewhat ill-defined regulations to govern exploration and development in Canada lands. Unfortunately, that legislation died on the Order Paper when an election occurred. We now have before us Bill C-48, which sets forth in a coherent and comprehensive fashion the terms on which exploration and development will occur in the Canada lands. Quite obviously, this legislation is timely. Indeed, in my view, it is overdue. It provides the petroleum industry with the ground rules on which it can proceed with investments, with an assurance of the terms on which investments can be made.

We have before us a bill which defines the relationship of the federal government and the oil companies active in the Canada lands. It is not a bill about native people's claims. It is not a bill about the ownership of any particular area, or claims to ownership of any particular area in the Canada lands. What the bill does is to set out the terms and conditions for explora-