

Government Orders

This weekend I noted in the popular press that the state of California has come out with some pretty new and stringent regulations regarding emissions from automobiles. If I may quote from a newspaper article:

The new rules require carmakers to start selling cleaner vehicles starting in 1994 in the smoggy Los Angeles basin and 1997 statewide. By 2003, all cars sold in the state must emit at least 70-per-cent fewer hydrocarbons and other smog-forming chemicals than in the 1993 models.

That is not much time. California represents around 11 per cent of the consuming public in the United States.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the economics of this project do not make sense. I suggest that the concern about the greenhouse effect will speed up the development of alternate forms of energy. If California takes the lead in the next decade or two, we are not going to see the amount of gasoline used in cars. I suggest that the pay-back period of Hibernia will be such that we will never get back what we are sinking into it now.

In conclusion, I wish to repeat that it seems to me what is happening in this House is that we are indeed a ship of fools, debating about economic spin-offs and benefits for which later generations are going to curse us.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, a man with your experience in Parliament should understand our astonishment as we, from the Bloc Québécois, witness what is happening here today. It was only last week that our group made its debut in Parliament.

During the first few days, we made a list of the matters about to be raised on the floor that would be of critical importance both for Canada and for Quebec. Among those, was Hibernia. Wednesday morning, we saw the notice in the Order Paper and knew that we would have an opportunity to discuss the project and the bill. We all knew that several questions remained unanswered in June, after the parliamentary committee sat. I was a government member and others were members of the government too. The project was announced a little while ago, but the figures quoted were unverified. The week before, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources made a statement, announcing that the project

would benefit the Americans, not the Canadians. There are still many important questions to be answered.

At the time, Mr. Speaker, we figured: "That is no big deal! We are members of Parliament. We will go back to the House and ask the real questions that this bill raises. So, we started by introducing an amendment dealing specifically with the spinoffs for Canada. Everybody told us that the project itself had to produce interesting spinoffs for Canada. We have no problem with that, Mr. Speaker. But then, when we saw the legislation and the confusion in the remarks made by the ministers who spoke on the bill, we introduced an amendment to force the promoters of this project to limit the bidding to Canadian firms at first, for the first round.

There are, amongst others, the five big modules of this project. We are told that one of the modules would be assigned specifically to Newfoundland. Under the circumstances, it is reasonable that Newfoundland be responsible for one of the platforms, or modules. As for the rest of the project, since it is a Canadian project, we have moved an amendment to bring about a vote in the House to amend the bill. We do not wish to block the project, to delay it, or to kill it outright, but to have it brought about in a way that is favourable to the economy and in the interests of both Canada and Quebec. What do we see? We discuss the matter for about two hours. It is the beginning of the session, the beginning of the year. Everything was going smoothly; there was no filibuster; we respected the Standing Orders and waited to be recognized before exercising our right to speak. After just two hours, we are being cut off. We are being told that enough has been said and that we cannot discuss the subject any further.

That is what we do not understand, Mr. Speaker, because this bill pertains to capital matters. We only want the right to discuss them in the House. The debate is essentially about closure. Our arguments should have been limited to this procedure, but everybody, government as well as opposition have raised arguments relating to the content of the bill. It ensues that many basic issues have not been mentioned, debated and or resolved.

What about fundamental issues like the technological future of Canada, to name only one? Will Canada always submit to policies dictated by foreign companies? Will Canada show, once and for all the will to invest in its own future? Will Canada, Quebec and all the other provinces ensure that from now on the high-tech mega projects