

Energy Supplies Emergency Act

● (2150)

We are suffering from lack of foresight on the part of the government. The government should have foreseen difficulties this year. We barely escaped difficulties last year when it was apparent to the world that energy was running out. Certainly, for several months this year members on my side of the House suggested that energy may be running short. Even the Liberal government should have foreseen three years ago that certain measures were needed to preserve energy supplies in this country.

I wish to make a couple of suggestions which I have made before. These things could have been done by the government to alleviate the situation. For instance, the government might take advantage of certain storage facilities in various areas, especially in the eastern part of the country from which I come, and thereby make limited amounts of oil available in time of need. We have salt mines in Nova Scotia. I understand, from my slight knowledge of the west, that there are abandoned gas wells there which could be used to store oil and gas. I suggest that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) should consider using the salt mines in Nova Scotia which could hold tremendous quantities of oil. I do not think we can expect commercial companies to store the quantities I am speaking of; however, I do not see why the government should not build up significant inventories of oil which could be of substantial help in times when supplies are temporarily disrupted.

Another suggestion I wish to make, which perhaps is not new, relates to oil pipelines. Surely the advantages of an electrical grid are now apparent. The need for a national electrical grid system is apparent to all. I do not see why some kind of national grid for transmitting oil and gas should not be built as well. That ought to be investigated. The grid should be designed, not to supply all the needs of any market but to supply the top end of the market which the commercial companies seem reluctant or unable to supply. It is apparent that all commercial companies fulfil their supply commitments in a similar way. Therefore, what is required, I suggest, is some sort of publicly-owned system which would provide a supply cushion in the event of shortfalls.

May I mention something else. I have heard it suggested a number of times in this chamber and elsewhere that eastern Canada, which to my mind includes the maritime provinces, has for some years enjoyed cheap oil while parts of Canada west of the Ottawa Valley line have been required to pay higher prices for oil in order to foster the Canadian industry. I do not know of the experiences of other hon. members; however, if my experience of oil prices in the maritime provinces is the same as that of other hon. members, I suggest that that allegation will not strike a responsive cord in the hearts and minds of consumers in those provinces. There may have been some slightly cheaper prices in the eastern provinces; I am not qualified to comment on that. According to my information, in Nova Scotia the price of heating fuel has been one cent lower, at the maximum, than the price in Ontario. By the same token, for the past five or ten years since I have driven a car I have found when driving through Ontario and the western end of Quebec that gasoline has been between 10 and 15 cents cheaper in Ontario, or in the area

[Mr. Haliburton.]

west of the Ottawa Valley line. It was much more expensive in Nova Scotia, where I have done most of my driving. That higher price may be a distortion resulting from federal or provincial taxes: there may be some very good reason for it. I merely say that the suggestion that eastern consumers have benefited for some years from the expenditures undertaken west of the Ottawa Valley line will not bear examination in my area.

What moves has the government made in this alleged energy crisis? It has instituted a price freeze. Again, speaking as a consumer from the maritime provinces, may I suggest to the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) that the price freeze which he endorsed a few moments ago in fact is not a price freeze in the maritime provinces. If the government has imposed a price freeze, certainly the consumer in the maritime provinces is not overly aware of it. We are told that oil companies have been asked to freeze prices and not increase the margins under which they operate. At the same time, the consumer in eastern Canada is being asked to shoulder the full cost of increases of petroleum products imported into the country. There is no price freeze, then, east of the Ottawa Valley line; there is only a price freeze west of the Ottawa Valley line and, as I suspect, it is more apparent than real.

May I call it ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

HEALTH—NEED FOR INCREASED PERSONNEL TRAINED IN GERIATRICS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, I bring up this subject of aging and its problems in order to focus attention on the need for increased knowledge in the field of aging, its prevention and treatment. Many people, many of them professional, believe our knowledge is entirely inadequate to meet the demand. The need for this knowledge has grown because of the greater number of people who have avoided the pitfalls of acute diseases from infancy to 40 years of age as a result of the discovery of vaccines and serums. Diseases have been prevented by inoculations and the treatment of acute diseases has been controlled by sulphas, penicillin and antibiotics. For those principal reasons people now live longer. Actually, accidents now are the principal causes of death up to 40 years of age and over. That is why today the average span of life is nearly 75 years, as compared with just over 40 years at the turn of the century.

About one person in ten today in Canada is 65 years old or over. There are nearly two million such people in Canada. Hospital admission rates for those 65 years and over are three times greater than for younger people. Today, Mr. Speaker, 60 per cent of all deaths are owing to