

Energy Supplies

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Gillespie: Hon. members opposite applaud the notion that Petro-Canada should be dismantled.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Because you are making such a mess of it.

Mr. Gillespie: Some hon. members on the other side come from Atlantic Canada. Hon. members must know that if it were not for Petro-Canada there would have been no oil and gas exploration on the offshore Nova Scotia shelf in the last year.

Hon. members should know that as a result of Petro-Canada's initiatives it will be participating in the exploration and development of the coast off Labrador. Hon. members should know that Petro-Canada is stepping in because the French consortium, the EastCan group, is not prepared to go ahead. Petro-Canada is, because it is in the national interest, and because it believes there is a very good opportunity of discovering significant findings of oil and gas.

An hon. Member: Where?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Is Petro-Canada going to take over all the oil in Canada?

Mr. Gillespie: The Leader of the Opposition said weakly in Vancouver, when he was asked about Petro-Canada, that he would use the Canadian Commercial Corporation to buy oil and natural gas. That has to be as limp and lame an approach to our national energy problem as anything he has put forward. One could ask if he might use the Canadian Commercial Corporation as well when, let us say, the Chairman of mainland China said, "I want to deal with a Canadian national oil company. I want to deal with Petro-Canada. I want Petro-Canada to come to China and help us explore, and I would like you to bring some Canadian companies as well." Has the opposition explained how that would be done? I presume they would probably turn it over to Exxon because that has been their posture up to now.

The Leader of the Opposition might also be asked how he would replace Petro-Canada in a deal with the Norwegian state oil company which wants to deal with the national oil company of Canada. It is considering it, along with a number of very interesting proposals, including drilling in offshore waters such as the Arctic waters north of 60. I suppose the opposition, in a situation like that, would turn that over to one of the internationals as well.

When the government of Venezuela says it wants to deal with the national oil companies of other countries, and says it wants to deal with the national oil company of Canada, it must wonder about the leader of an opposition that hopes to be the government, who says he would destroy the national oil company. In effect, he is saying to Venezuela, "We do not want to deal with you."

[Mr. Gillespie.]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Is the hon. member rising for the purpose of asking a question?

Mr. Broadbent: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the minister has convinced me of the virtues of Petro-Canada. I noticed the members behind him are cheering a lot, and I wonder if he would inform the House under what circumstances Petro-Canada was created.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question can only be asked with the consent of the minister. The hon. member took the floor without permission of the Chair. I think it is for the minister to decide whether he wants to answer the question.

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to answer any questions at the end of my remarks. Let it be quite clear that the Government of Canada, the Liberal government, in 1974 introduced the legislation which created Petro-Canada. It received support from the New Democratic Party but absolutely no support from the Tory opposition. Ever since then the Conservative party has been out to stick a knife in the back—to stab Petro-Canada. They would dismantle and destroy one of the most important policy instruments for energy in this country.

Mr. McKenzie: Call the election.

Mr. Gillespie: Hon. members opposite you should quieten some of their friends.

Mr. McKenzie: Call the election.

Mr. Gillespie: Mr. Speaker, with your assistance, I should like to carry on with my remarks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure that the use of the word by the hon. member that I just heard is parliamentary. I think the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie) should be very careful, and at the same time should allow the minister to make his speech.

● (2030)

An hon. Member: Tell us a little about Bill C-42.

Mr. Gillespie: I recognize the sensitivity of some members opposite. I understand why they are embarrassed and why they are having difficulty with the decision of their leader.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gillespie: It is fairly obvious from those making a noise on the other side, and from those who are not, that there is a problem on the other side.

There are a number of important measures which this government has taken to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. I would like to refer to the measures that we have taken to stimulate electric power development with the government in Newfoundland. We have created a very important corporation named the Lower Churchill Development Corporation. This is a corporation which can bring in a massive supply of power