

rather sad, because the disorder and chaos that have been created in that field of economic activity on which we have been relying for the impetus we need to keep our economy afloat, namely, the energy industry, has been seriously damaged by the self-inflicted wounds to which we bear witness.

I do not really think that I should oblige every member of this house to listen to me, but those who do not want to listen might have the courtesy to leave the chamber and conduct their conversations some place else. I wonder if I can persuade the Minister of State for Economic Development to pay some attention to that plea, because I do not want to have to shout.

**An Hon. Senator:** Take the meeting outside.

**Hon. G. I. Smith:** He couldn't understand it anyway.

● (1440)

**Senator Roblin:** He understands it all too well. That is why he is going. He does not want to listen to it. That is probably the best course for him to follow, because in this bill we have major tax elements which comprise the centrepiece of national energy policy number one. We have the national gas and gas liquid tax on domestic supplies; we have the petroleum and gas revenue tax; and we have the incremental oil revenue tax, all of which, added together, will raise enormous sums. It is estimated that in the current fiscal year \$4.2 billion will be provided to the treasury of Canada by the revenues raised by these three taxes alone, and they are far from the grand totality of the taxes which the energy system is bearing in this country today. It represents enormous sums of money.

I point out to the house with respect to one of these taxes—namely, the national gas and gas liquid tax—that it is one which is regulated by order in council. How we, as a responsible body of legislators, could observe with an easy mind this breach of the taxing power of Parliament is something that I do not know, and I do not believe that we should condone the exercise of enormous taxing powers—\$1.5 billion this year would be raised by this tax—that is subject to regulation by order in council.

There are many uncertainties in the tax basis with which this bill deals. My honourable friend, Senator Smith, referred to the Alberta court case, and we know that insofar as it affects exports in Alberta of provincially-owned gas to the United States, there was a saw-off in the energy agreement of last fall, where the Province of Alberta said it would not press the point legally, and the Government of Canada said, "Well, we will reduce the tax to zero"; and so on that happy note they adjusted their differences. But it still remains to be seen whether there are not other challenges to this piece of legislation.

The bill assumes, in a confident manner, that the Hibernia situation will be resolved in favour of the government—although that matter is before two courts at the present time. So there are certain uncertainties that we can hardly weigh or balance at the present time with respect to the ultimate impact of this bill, and with respect to the legal factors on which it is based.

[Senator Roblin.]

While the future impact of these taxing measures is perhaps uncertain, the past record of the taxes that have been applied so far in the petroleum and energy business is quite clear. There has been an enormous increase in the tax demand on Canadian energy users, and this bill is an integral part of that tax demand on the citizens of Canada. For example, the federal tax on gasoline in December 1979 was 18 cents per gallon. The corporation tax accounted for four cents; the Syncrude special tax accounted for two cents; the federal sales tax was five cents; the excise tax was seven cents, and the total was 18 cents. In this year of grace, right now, the tax on that same gallon of gas, insofar as the federal tax collector is concerned, is not 18 cents but 60 cents. That is quite a rise in the course of a couple of years. The corporation tax is now 6 cents. There is no longer a Syncrude tax; the federal sales tax is 13 cents and the excise tax is seven cents. The petroleum compensation tax, which is supposed to save Canadians from the vicissitudes of international oil prices, is 18 cents. The Canadian ownership tax, which is the price we pay for Petrofina, is four cents; the petroleum and gas revenue tax included in this bill is seven cents; the incremental oil revenue tax included in this bill is five cents, for a total of 60 cents. There may be other taxes. If so, I have been unable to track them down, but with respect to this situation, the tax on gasoline by the gallon by the federal government has gone from 18 cents to 60 cents in this short period of time. My calculations indicate that at this time next year I will be able to say it is 77 cents.

So much for the election of 1979. So much for those promises so confidently given to Canadians about a made-in-Canada price for gasoline and the tax implications that would result from that. Is it any wonder that there is some lack of confidence in the integrity of politicians today? I use the general term. Is there any doubt that there is some lack of confidence in the reliability of the present administration in carrying out its undertakings to the people of this country?

**Hon. Robert Muir:** Honourable senators, I rise on a point of order. Senator Roblin is making an important speech and is putting a number of important facts on the record. Without any reflection on the Deputy Leader of the Government, who is a prominent member of this chamber, why is the Minister of State for Economic Development—there is not much development, God knows, under him—not here? There is no Cabinet minister in the chamber to listen to Senator Roblin. I repeat that this is no reflection on Senator Frith, but surely Senator Olson should be here to listen to this speech. Is he so busy he cannot remain in this chamber—

**An Hon. Senator:** He doesn't care.

**Senator Muir:** He doesn't care. He doesn't give a damn, or so it appears from his attitude. In my opinion, he should be here, and I would appreciate it if the Deputy Leader of the Government would do his utmost to get the minister, who is supposed to have great influence in the Cabinet, back into the chamber to listen to what is being said by Senator Roblin.