

Summer Recess

What about uranium? The hon. member for Lincoln (Mr. Mackasey) has made reference to the position of this party on renewable resources. I wonder about the question of uranium exports. The Premier of Saskatchewan has been to China and Japan to discuss the export of uranium from Saskatchewan. He has not suggested that the uranium should be left in the ground or that it be used only domestically for energy purposes. To the Japanese he said, "We are prepared in Saskatchewan to give you a guaranteed supply of uranium—a guaranteed supply of uranium, exporting that commodity from our country". The New Democratic Party speaks with one mouth in terms of its political attempts on the floor of this House, keeping this House in session, and yet with another mouth its key supporters across the country take a diametrically opposed position.

An hon. Member: They are full of potash.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to address myself to some of the broader aspects of this matter. As we consider whether this House should adjourn, I think it is important to review what has taken place during this session and consider the challenges that will face us when we return.

We have been very much preoccupied with matters relating to energy. I think it would be appropriate to consider the prospects held out to us by the government and to review the progress made toward an energy policy. The people of Canada could take advantage of the adjournment to advise members on both sides of the House on how they think the government has performed and what positions they think should be taken. It might be useful, in that context, to review some of the undertakings given by the government in the Speech from the Throne.

The speech contained several items relating to energy. Without according them any priority I should like to take them individually and comment on each.

The Speech from the Throne, read by the Governor General on behalf of the government on April 14, stated:

A new blended price is to be established which will progressively incorporate the costs of the oil import compensation program, while at the same time maintaining a single national price for consumers.

I do not believe that new blended price has materialized either by way of legislation, agreement or substitution. We are still trying to find out what this blended price is all about—trying to figure out if it was as stated by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) who was asked during the election campaign what was meant by a blended price and who replied:

If the price of conventional oil is x , you will have a price of x plus y for the non-conventional oil, and then the international price—you know what it is—but we have indicated we will continue to subsidize the price . . . So what you would end up with would be a mix of these prices.

An hon. Member: Say that again.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: There is erudition unequalled in terms of political pronouncement, statements and explanations of policy in the history of our country. Not only has no legislation been

introduced or the policy been brought in in any way, but we do not even know what it means.

The second item in the Speech from the Throne was this:

The blended price will reflect the right of producing provinces and corporations to a fair return for their resources and their investment.

They have been silent, Mr. Speaker. We have no knowledge of any statement. Five months have passed since the election but there is not a tittle of evidence on this new idea of fair return. At a press conference the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) suggested in a rather jocular fashion that they were going to give an arm and a leg but there would be no tradeoffs. We still do not know precisely what they mean by a fair return to provinces and corporations, however.

The third thing brought out in the Speech from the Throne was that the government did not intend to impose the 18 cents increase in excise tax on transportation fuel. It has not done that yet—directly, I should say. But we can rest assured, on the basis of what is happening in terms of international prices and general commitments in principle, that we in Canada are faced with the highest increase in the price of oil on the basis of the cost of imported oil and growing dependence on that. The 18 cents will look like a paltry sum in the eyes of Canadians by the time this government has finished its mandate in office.

● (1650)

I come to another point. Under the heading "Security of Energy at a Fair Price" we find the following paragraph:

A petroleum price auditing agency will be established to investigate and report to the government and people of Canada on oil company costs, profits, capital expenditures and levels of Canadian ownership.

There is no legislation, nor was any reference made in the House today by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources to this new commission. I simply wonder aloud. When I asked the minister a week ago last Friday about this particular commission, he seemed to be under the misapprehension that he already had the powers for this agency on the basis of the petroleum monitoring act which now allows the government to make a full audit of the oil companies' books. We have not had any decision with respect to this new agency. We have no idea what the government is talking about with respect to the mandate and what is happening. So there is another item promised in the Speech from the Throne on which there has been absolutely no action nor any indication of action planned in the immediate future.

I hope I have 40 minutes to carry this out because the promises are rather lengthy. Generally speaking, I can get rid of my part of the speech very quickly because I can tell you in advance that when I go over these things my reply will be either: no action, no action taken, or none contemplated in the immediate future.

The Speech from the Throne goes on to say:

In spite of Canada's large energy resources, which put this country in the extremely favourable position of being a major energy exporter, we remain partially dependent upon imported oil.