

Energy Supplies Emergency Act

goes to the whole issue about which the hon. member for Verdun spoke. It is the question: What kind of Canada do we expect? Today I was ashamed to hear the Prime Minister say something in this House of Commons about the attitude of the members from Alberta toward bilingualism. I note, Mr. Speaker, that one Alberta member formerly occupied your chair as Speaker of this House. That member is fluent in both official languages.

● (1720)

I would remind the Prime Minister that many members from Alberta and, indeed, from other parts of Canada who, like myself, live in areas where very little French is spoken, are making such efforts as are possible to speak and understand both languages. For the Prime Minister, a man who should know better, a man who should be concerned about the unity of this country as a national leader, to make a comment of that kind shows an insensitivity which I deeply resent. I call attention to the speech which the right hon. gentleman made in Vancouver over the weekend in which he castigated the Premier of the province of Alberta. It has been suggested the Premier of Alberta acts like a sheik. We have seen other sheiks since then in this country.

I say the province of Alberta would be much better off today had it cut back production. The price of oil is going up, and perhaps Albertans should raise theirs and do something to make the rest of us feel the pinch. But hon. members opposite know as well as I do that far from taking action of this kind, Alberta has encouraged further production, further pumping of its wells. It has encouraged the shipment of more oil than is necessary for the British Columbia market so that tankers can be filled for delivery to the east coast of Canada, all at a time when the price of oil to the province has been frozen at approximately \$4 a barrel.

If the Premier of Alberta were not a Canadian, if he were really operating in the interests of the multinational corporations, his first action would be to cut back production of oil in the province to last year's levels. He would ensure that any further deliveries were paid for at the full market price. And if there were a price freeze in this country, as there seems to be—and I will say more about that later—he would refuse to sell any more oil until that freeze had been lifted. But the Premier of Alberta is a Canadian first. He is the kind of person who, by his leadership in western Canada, will do a great deal to make this country one Canada. The attitude of the federal government in seeking to be divisive, in seeking to destroy the unity of Canada, can only be described as despicable.

Some time ago it was suggested there was a price freeze in this country with regard to oil. In fact there has never been a price freeze in connection with oil. What we see is a voluntary arrangement between the leading oil refineries to keep their prices within certain realistic limits; that is all. There is no freeze. There is nothing which would prevent Imperial Oil, for instance, raising its price in Toronto tomorrow. There is no legislation which would prevent such action. There is no incomes policy or prices and incomes board which determines what the retail price should be. It is true there is a tax which is supposed, indirectly, to keep the price of crude in Canada lower than the world price, but there is no certainty that this arrange-

[Mr. Blenkarn.]

ment results, in fact, in lower prices for Canadian consumers.

On my way to Ottawa on Monday morning I was talking to a person from Detroit who happens to be organizing the world energy conference which is to take place in Detroit in September. I spoke to him casually about the price of gasoline. It turned out that in Ontario, in Mississauga, I am paying approximately the same price for gas as he is in Detroit. I wonder what is really happening. I suspect that in Detroit he is buying gasoline extracted from Canadian crude. I suspect, too, that he is burning gasoline in respect of which an export tax has been paid. But it seems to make no difference when it comes to what I have to pay for gasoline at my Imperial pump.

I wonder when the government is going to turn honest and apply a real price freeze at the retail level as part of a total incomes package which will, at least, attempt to halt the present rampant inflation and benefit consumers instead of clinging to a tax which, though supposed to be to the advantage of Canadians, does very little, if anything, to assist them. Advocates of the tax have suggested its purpose is to recapture windfall profits made by oil companies. We are dealing here with a most important matter. Surely, Canadians should receive the full world price for their oil; surely the price structure must be such as to enable Canadians to take advantage of the fact that they are Canadians by buying Canadian oil products at prices cheaper than world prices. This has been recognized both by the sheik from Saskatchewan and by Peter Loughheed, the Premier of Alberta.

I, too, am disturbed, as was the hon. member for Verdun, by the suggestion that a province could use its resources to bargain for other advantages through confederation. I thought this was a bad precedent. Nevertheless, the reason for this attitude is, I suggest, the way in which the government has treated the provinces in the past, not only in the energy field but in the transportation field and on the issue of industrial development. The government does not really care about those provinces. It has simply told them what it intends to do: it has operated on a principle of confrontation.

Mr. Speaker, in a situation like that, when one person declares unilaterally that he will tax the resources of your province, the next thing that happens is that the person who has been treated in this fashion acts, or reacts, in the same fashion. It is impossible to develop a spirit of community in Canada on the basis of the concept of two lawyers engaged in a lawsuit, or of two businessmen competing with each other at an auction. This whole atmosphere of confrontation in dominion-provincial relations is one which ought not to arise and did not arise before this Prime Minister became Liberal leader. This has been the climate over the past four years and it is about time it changed because it is not doing Canada any good.

● (1730)

The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) suggested today in a question that this bill and the matter of the tax on resources be postponed until after the January 21 to 23 conference. I think that was a sensible suggestion. This bill and the tax have set in motion taxes and legislation by the provinces which to some extent, or perhaps