

Energy Supplies Emergency Act

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, we have heard some strange statements today. A few moments ago, I listened to the hon. member for York North (Mr. Danson) making a speech he would not have made the day before yesterday. After the NDP propped up the government in the vote last night, the hon. member for York North gave them a gentle slap on the wrist, and then waxed eloquent over the unity in the Liberal party. That was the first thing to cause a little wonderment in our minds.

We then listened to the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) make some strange comments. He referred to the Progressive Conservative party and what he termed the changes in policy or lack of policy. I remember a number of occasions when the leader of that party went out west and squared off, stating this government had had it; the NDP were not going to support them any longer; they had the government on the ropes and when he got back, he was going to deal a knock-out blow. When he returned, he said that because the government had taken a tiny step, his party would continue to prop them up. Instead of dealing a knock-out blow, he hit them rather gently, then wrapped his arms around them and held them up again.

The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie referred to the situation in Alberta, and the fact there is going to be an increase in the cost of fuel there. However, he did not say anything about the increase in the cost of natural gas in the province of British Columbia, where it was announced that the cost of natural gas had increased by 81 per cent. The NDP somehow neglect to make reference to that because it does not fit in with their story.

In addition, we hear the members of the NDP talk about the monsters called multinational corporations. One day I tried to count the number of times they used the words "multinational corporations", but I lost track. I will not comment on multinational corporations except to say that I read in the paper the other night that Premier Ed Schreyer of Manitoba said some very kind words about them. Therefore, I find it extremely difficult to reconcile statements made here by members of the NDP with statements made across the country by both their national leader and premiers of the various provinces.

I am reminded of an incident that happened some years ago when I had an opportunity to attend a commonwealth conference in Jamaica. A delegate from Western Samoa stood and very sincerely but gently said something like this: In my country when a speaker gets up to make an address, he starts off by giving thanks to the Heavenly Father for all His goodness. Perhaps today we should give thanks to the good Lord for the moderate weather we are experiencing this fall, which will somehow offset or counterbalance the problems we face because of the ineptitude of the Liberal administration.

As we think of the statements that have been made in recent days, and the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)—outlining the program he classed as a new national policy, it seems as though he gave a Christmas present to the New Democratic Party, promising that in the working of this program he would go to some length to meet the desires and demands of that group. This makes us think of somebody playing the tune and somebody

[Mr. Symes.]

dancing. I am not quite sure who is playing the tune and who is doing the dancing. The government said they are stating their policy and that it is a purely Liberal policy. However, a member of the NDP says the government has swallowed their proposals and therefore it is doing alright.

We cannot help but feel sorry for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald). When we consider his statements in light of the statement made by the Prime Minister, it seems as though the Prime Minister pulled the rug from under him. Those statements have, in almost every respect, negated everything the minister told the House during the past two or three months. I will not take time to quote *Hansard* for the past two months or so to try to reconcile the minister's answers with the statement made by the Prime Minister just the other day. For example, what the Prime Minister said on December 6 pre-empts the bill before us at the present time. By the way, we are dealing with a bill that is before the House. The Prime Minister said, as recorded at page 8478 of *Hansard*:

We are confident that no Canadian need fear serious shortages of oil and fuel this winter,—

I wish the government would tell us and the Canadian people whether or not there is an energy crisis in Canada. We hear that eastern Canada is going to freeze this winter. Then, in a gross miscalculation on the part of the government, we hear that the refinery at Come-By-Chance will be able to supply most of the oil that is needed. Next, the government tells us it will not be producing products in time for this winter because it cannot get crude oil. Friday morning we heard that it already has stored some 3.5 million barrels and there are two supertankers on the way. This government has so confused the issues that they have somehow, intentionally or otherwise, alarmed the people of Canada for their own political ends. I do not think this increases the confidence that was expressed in the House last night.

● (1610)

I should like to say a few words about the proposed price freeze to which reference has been made. This myth was started by the Prime Minister on September 4. I grant that there may have been some price freeze in western Canada, but whatever freeze there was in eastern Canada was very difficult to visualize or comprehend. Is the government so forgetful that it does not realize that since the price freeze supposedly took effect gasoline prices rose nine cents a gallon here in the capital city of Canada? When the minister was questioned after the first increase by a member of this House and was told that there did not appear to be a price freeze, the minister replied: "Oh, yes, there is a freeze; it is just frozen at a different level". That seems rather strange logic, Mr. Speaker.

I should like now to make a few comments on the background to the situation we are currently facing. There are few, if any, Canadians who would disagree with the widely acknowledged fact that a global energy crisis presently exists. You never miss the water till the well runs dry is a proverb that holds true as well with regard to energy supplies. We have moved forward into the use and enjoyment of each successive type of energy on the assumption that we need not be too concerned about the