

some amount related to the average price for foreign crude laid down in Montreal.

In a meeting between the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and ministers of the Alberta government in the latter part of October, the Alberta ministers were led to believe that because of the distortions created by the Middle East war, the freeze on western Canadian crude was soon to be lifted. Instead, in his announcement to the House on November 1 the minister announced an increase in the export tax to \$1.90 a barrel for the month of December. Apparently, even when this minister does consult the provinces and an apparent consensus in reached, he feels free to change his mind within the next two or three days.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**Mr. Andre:** During the month of November, on several occasions the minister assured the House, the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, as well as industry representatives and provincial governments, that the freeze was definitely to be removed on February 1. In reply to a question by my colleague, the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Bawden), who asked the minister whether he was irrevocably committed to removing the freeze on February 1, the minister replied affirmatively. In this he was backed up by the Prime Minister who, demanding a half-hour of prime time on television, stated among other things that this freeze was coming off on February 1. Yet in spite of all these assurances, last Thursday the Prime Minister came to the House and participating in the debate for the first time, to my recollection, stated that the freeze on Canadian crude oil would remain in place after February 1. That statement undermined any last vestige of credibility that the minister, the Prime Minister or this government might have retained with the producing provinces or with the industry.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Andre:** The words "indecision" and "vacillating" are almost too mild to describe this government's behaviour in this regard. In fact, "dishonest" is more appropriate.

The Calgary *Albertan* of Saturday described the statement as follows:

Above all it is morally and politically craven—a sickeningly ignominious concession to the New Democrats' political blackmail.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**An hon. Member:** Read it again.

**Mr. Andre:** The editorial continues:

By changing, at the NDPs demand, a course which his government had clearly signalled, Mr. Trudeau has prejudiced the credibility of his entire energy policy. He may find, in due course, that he has also forfeited the respect of the country.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Andre:** I am new to politics, but I have always believed that a publicly stated commitment by a minister of the Crown on a subject as fundamentally important as this was second only to a written contract in terms of binding the parties concerned. I also believed that under our British parliamentary system, if such a commitment

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was broken the minister concerned had absolutely no alternative but to resign.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Andre:** Otherwise, the veracity of all other ministerial commitments is subject to doubt and we would lose one of the fundamental pillars of our system. I would have thought that a minister with even a modicum of self-respect or concern for the office he holds, rather than have his promises, his commitments and indeed his integrity destroyed in that manner, would resign.

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At this point in history, with the necessity for the federal government, the provincial governments and industry to co-operate and work together to solve the problems facing us, it is essential that Canada have a Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources who is credible. Is it at all reasonable to expect that any provincial government or any industrial representative could accept the word of this minister as being in any way a true reflection of government attitudes, or in any way a commitment by the government?

In view of his sorry history of vacillating, inconsistent, incongruous behavior in respect of the energy situation, this minister has no credibility with the provinces, with the industry or indeed with the Canadian public. There are too many important decisions to be made which require the co-operation and confidence of all concerned segments of our society to have this minister continue to hold the position he does.

This "two nations" oil policy has already caused considerable economic damage. All members of the House, and certainly the minister, know full well that industry cannot operate, cannot plan, cannot work when the rules are changing week by week. They must know what the situation regarding prices, taxes and exports will be before they can initiate their exploration and expansion programs. When the rules are changed they must be able to ask the minister what his intentions are, and have some confidence in his replies. None of these circumstances exist today and the industry is being hurt as a result.

I want to make it abundantly clear that I am not expressing my concern for these companies or their shareholders. There are probably more shareholders in these oil companies living in the constituencies of Mount Royal and Rosedale than there are in Calgary Centre, and if these shareholders and owners do not like what is happening, let them complain to their members of parliament. I am expressing my concern because of the tens of thousands of my constituents who make their living and who work in this industry. These are ordinary working people—labourers, secretaries, draftsmen, drillers, welders, and so on. They are not experts on the energy situation, but they do recognize that they are the ones who will be hurt most if the oil industry is damaged.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Andre:** The owners and the executives can move on to other locations, other occupations: they can adjust. But these ordinary working people cannot, and they will