

potential resources of our frontier areas can supply this nation with the security of supply which Canadians in future years will require. However, that is going to require very substantial investment.

We believe that investment should be made by the private sector. We also believe that while the private sector has shown every inclination to re-invest those funds, it is essential in the public interest that parliament and the Canadian people have the legislative right to examine how those cash flows are being spent and whether they are being spent to the advantage of Canadians. It is the purpose of this bill to ensure that such surveillance can be carried out to the satisfaction of the Canadian public.

● (1552)

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I shall naturally begin my remarks by straightening out the minister, if I can, as to the importance of terminology and as to the importance of understanding why self-sufficiency is an important policy objective. Based on the figures he gave this morning, by the year 1990, or perhaps earlier, we shall, given a continuation of the present policy, be facing a fuel bill with the Arab countries and Venezuela of \$6.5 billion at today's prices. We shall have to generate this amount by means which are not obvious at this point in time because we are already running tremendous trade deficits in the manufacturing sector.

Since this \$6.5 billion is being used to pay for consumer imports, the expenditure represents a direct loss to the Canadian economy, one which can be translated into lost jobs and so on. What will happen to the value of our dollar when the nation is subjected to a continued drain of that nature? It might well drop to 85 cents or to 80 cents. What will be the effect on the cost of living of the increased price of the goods we are obliged to import?

Canada has the geological potential to be self-sufficient, to be independent of the political intricacies of the Middle East oil trade. Since we are not obliged to pay out these large sums of money, every opportunity for self-sufficiency should be seized and pursued. The minister has suggested we would be opposed to importing cheap oil from secure sources. That is an absurd statement. But would the hon. gentleman like to tell us where we can find cheap oil from secure sources today?

Mr. Gillespie: Do you disagree with swap arrangements?

Mr. Andre: Not at all, if the minister is talking about trade back and forth.

Mr. Gillespie: That is self-reliance.

Mr. Andre: That is producing as much as we consume and it means a change in priorities. In my opinion the attitude of the government has not changed since 1973, when the first energy policy was produced. It still holds the view that the prime function of the oil and gas producers is to be a source of revenue for the federal treasury. An examination of policy statements, an examination of the motivation behind this bill, leave one with the impression that the role of government is

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considered to be that of taking as much of the pie as possible. Of course, to change the metaphor, they do not want to kill the goose altogether, but their attitude remains unchanged: it is to take as much of the pie as possible. A government which views the issue in this way is guilty of distorted perception, because the first priority is to achieve self-sufficiency—to produce as much as we consume. We are, of course, dealing here with the total package, not just with oil and gas.

This is not the type of bill we welcome with great enthusiasm but it is not one which invites very much opposition either, so we shall not hinder its passage. Nevertheless, there are aspects which cause concern. To begin with, I question the motives for bringing it forward in the first place since the information which the government now seeks to compel companies to provide is already being given voluntarily. This has been the case for five or six years. Why bring out the whip when, all this time, the carrot has proven to be effective? Why these compulsory tactics?

Then again, the clause which would permit the minister to disclose confidential information when he deemed it to be in the public interest is abhorrent on philosophical grounds. Is the next step to be the disclosure by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Guay) of confidential information supplied by taxpayers on the ground that it would be in the public interest to do so? Corporations are not anonymous bodies despite the inclination to regard them as such. There are people involved—employers, workers, shareholders. If the minister were to use the blackmailing capability provided by the clause to which I have referred, it might be a comfort to him to think he was using it only against corporations, but he would be using it against people, the people who own and manage and work for these companies. As I say, the clause is abhorrent.

Another clause which I find abhorrent is that which would allow officials to burst in and seize records should the minister believe there was reason to do so. We know what happens when officials are armed with powers of this sort; I hardly need to explain why provisions of this kind should be opposed.

In our opinion, this bill is another candidate for a "sunset clause". We see no reason why this legislation should still be on the books 50, 60 or 100 years from now after we have used up all our petroleum and are relying on solar power or nuclear fission. We do not like the idea of some official sitting in a back room compiling forms and having them filled out simply because that is what the law says. Let us limit the life of the bill to five or six years; if the government thinks its operation should be extended it could be done at that time. I have no doubt parliament would agree to consider whether it should be extended or not.

I see, Mr. Speaker, that it is four o'clock.

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Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask the parliamentary secretary whether we shall be proceeding to