

Energy Supplies

from offshore, and he said that was good enough. I do not think "may" is good enough. I think Petro-Can needs the power in an emergency to be the sole purchaser for this country because other companies have contracts. This time we are in trouble with Exxon, but next time we might have trouble with one of the other seven Big Sisters, and if the government does not have the power under this emergency act to make Petro-Can the sole purchaser of oil from offshore, we may have the same problem with some of the other companies that we are having with Exxon this time around. I think that is why the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie was very wise and had a lot of foresight when he moved this amendment to the bill.

The other thing I find passing strange is that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie), who has spent a great deal of time talking about these multinational companies, about what great things Petro-Can will do, about the very progressive policy of the government, will not accept the reasonable and moderate amendment put to the House by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie. I wonder whether or not the Liberal party is just interested in appearing to be the great nationalist party, just appearing to be a party that is fighting multinational oil companies, just trying to appear as the great progressive party. I can see one of the members opposite nodding his head in the affirmative, a member from the back benches opposite. I suspect that they are doing this because the election is coming in a few weeks time and they want to appear to be the party that is interested in protecting the Canadian people against the multinational corporations.

Then, of course, we have the Conservative party. The House leader of that party said that the Canadian Commercial Corporation can purchase the oil in case of an emergency. I ask him: if we have an emergency, why should we not give Petro-Can the power to do the purchasing? Because it is Petro-Can that will have the expertise and the people who know the energy and oil business, not the Canadian Commercial Corporation, and it is Petro-Can which will be in a position to move fast. So if they grant the possibility that this might have to be done, why do they not concede the point that the best agency to do it is Petro-Can? The thinking of the Conservative party does not make sense.

The other point I want to make about the Progressive Conservative party is that they seem to have fits any time you mention Petro-Can. They are on the record as wanting to get rid of Petro-Can. That is the only little tool we have to fight for Canada as a country in the world scene when it comes to oil, but they want to get rid of it. They want to kill the baby before it is properly matured. I see that the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) said the following last Friday when criticizing Petro-Can. He said he is against it:

—solely and simply because Petro-Canada people have no experience and no negotiating expertise in this field whatsoever.

What kind of faith do they have in our country? Do they not have any faith in Canada or in Canadians?

[Mr. Nystrom.]

I remember when the provincial government in Saskatchewan decided three years ago to nationalize the major part of the potash industry. The Conservative and Liberal parties in my province said we do not have the expertise, we do not know how to do it. They said that if you tried to nationalize potash, the purchaser of potash would go elsewhere to buy the product. They did not recognize, of course, that the other biggest source of potash is Soviet Russia.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, that over 40 per cent of the potash in Saskatchewan is now publicly owned, and it is not someone in the United States who is president of the company. It is a farm boy from south Regina who is president of that company. The headquarters of the company are in Saskatoon. The vice-president is also from Saskatchewan. The management is from our own province, the profits we are making are staying in our province, and the head office jobs are in our province. That company is already, after less than three years, the largest potash company in the world, with the exception of Soviet Russia.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nystrom: So I say to the Conservatives: do you not have any faith in Canada? Do you not have any faith in Canadians? You only seem to have faith in Exxon and in the seven Big Sisters in the oil world. I know that is the answer of the Conservatives from Alberta and I am afraid it is the answer of the Conservative party from one part of this country to the other.

I want to say in conclusion that I hope the tame, small pussycat sitting across the way with the big Cheshire cat grin will sharpen his teeth, turn into a tiger and start practising the things he is talking about. I hope he will move to strengthen Petro-Can so as to make Petro-Can into the largest oil company in this country. I hope that, in co-operation with the provinces, he will make sure that the oil and gas industries in Canada are taken under public ownership where they belong.

For the life of me I do not see why non-renewable resources should be in the hands of private interests, particularly of companies which are not even Canadian. But I do not think it is much use substituting the decisions made in a foreign corporate boardroom and placing them in a Canadian corporate boardroom. If the minister wants to show real leadership, he should negotiate with the provinces with the objective of making sure that the majority of gas and oil in this country is taken under public ownership. I assure him that at least one province in this country, namely, Saskatchewan, would be only too happy to join him in ensuring that gas and oil are owned by Canadians and are owned collectively by society as a whole.

For these reasons I urge the government to accept the motion put forward by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie. It is moderate and reasonable, and in time of emergency Petro-Can would be the sole purchasing agency for gas and oil in this country.

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words on this amendment. I think perhaps we