

I conclude by saying that this matter of a national petroleum corporation is too important to be smothered by a few reactionaries in this House or in the government. It is the people of Canada, particularly those east of the Ottawa Valley, who will be the sufferers unless we set up some type of national marketing mechanism. As far as the New Democratic Party is concerned, we shall continue to push the minister and the government to bring in legislation between now and Christmas for such a national petroleum corporation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, following the statement by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Ressources (Mr. Macdonald) who this time sent us a copy of his statement in advance and in French it gives me great pleasure to join with my colleagues in making comments in this House on the important problem raised by him.

Our shortage of energy and oil in Canada, Mr. Speaker, is due primarily to a lack of energy and foresight of this and previous ministers who failed to take preventive measures when they should have in respect of the energy problem in Canada.

The statement made today called for the acceptance of price increases requested by oil companies in Canada, one of 2 cents a gallon for September and October, and another of \$1 a barrel for November.

The minister stated that price increases have to be granted to those companies if Canada is to be assured of an adequate supply of petroleum products. That, Mr. Speaker, is another proof of our economic dependence on petroleum products because price increases must be accepted if we are to heat our homes and run our cars.

There again, Mr. Speaker, is proof that we are colonized when 83 per cent of the oil industry in Canada is under foreign control. We export Canadian gas at ridiculous prices and we import gas at higher prices. We are the eternal milk cows of multinational oil companies. It is proven today, Mr. Speaker, that there is no real oil surplus in Canada and yet we have been exporting our products for years and at ridiculous prices. Even if we had surpluses we should save them to meet the demand in coming years while at the same time ensuring a low domestic price. But no, the opposite was done. We have exported at low prices—

Mr. Roy (Laval): I think that prices—

Mr. Rondeau: Prices change every week; you just have to follow the rates at the Montreal Stock Exchange to know the export prices.

I notice that the hon. member for Laval (Mr. Roy) is not familiar with oil problems and that he will be short of oil. If he has not yet been short of fuel oil, he has been without light for a long time.

We import at higher and higher prices, as the minister has just said, when he announced an increase in prices on imports. The policy of the minister does not make any sense. The Canadian consumer is always footing the bill and multinational oil companies pocket millions of dollars

Oil and Gas

while an embarrassed and powerless minister looks on, a member of a party "liberally" financed by the same multinational companies.

Those companies rule the roost, they determine the prices and the future of Canadian petroleum products at the face of the minister, they use tax exemptions allowed for research to swallow up the profits and in this manner they finance their oil explorations throughout the world instead of promoting the industrialization and the marketing of Canadian products.

This evening, according to the minister's statement, the export tax is increased by \$1.90 a barrel for the month of December, and the companies increase their import prices. A tax of \$1.90 a barrel is applied on export prices and it is agreed to pay more for our imports. Where is the difference? Here it is: the Canadian consumer will pay more for imports than the additional amount the government will collect in export taxes. Mr. Speaker, it takes economists to do that. Government economists are seeking a solution to the oil problem. They must certainly not find one as they would then lose their job. They are paid to look and they must look without finding anything. They have nevertheless found a solution, but it solves nothing. And the minister tells us that there is an energy problem in Canada. On February 14, 1973, the minister was reported as having said:

● (2050)

[English]

... the oil wells of the western provinces are not being over-produced; and that no shortages of crude are on the horizon for Canadian refineries.

These assurances have come from energy minister Macdonald, from members of Alberta's cabinet, and from all oil industry spokesmen, as well as from such U.S. authorities as Senator Henry Jackson and Senator Frank Ross.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, why is it that in February we were told that there was no problem, that the oil production in Canada was adequate, and that today we hear about a shortage of oil products? And the *Winnipeg Free Press* of July 10, 1973, tells why we are supposed to have a shortage of oil products in Canada. Here is what this newspaper said:

[English]

"Phoney Shortage".

Since the start of the present energy crisis in the United States, which has seen hundreds of service stations close down and hundreds more restrict their hours of service, there have been claims that the crisis is a phoney—a crisis brought on deliberately by the major oil companies.

This view, much as it may have been discounted in the beginning, has now been given overwhelming support by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission in a staff report. According to the report, 18 major oil companies in the U.S. have, for all intents and purposes, worked as a cartel or monopoly with a view to squeezing out their independent competitors and keeping their prices—and profits—high.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the minister would have us believe that he is forced to limit the consumption of oil products in