

Adjournment Debate

We are part of nature and our civilization has its roots in it. It has moulded man's culture and influenced most of mankind's economic, artistic and scientific achievements. To live in harmony with nature is our best hope of promoting the development of our economy and of our creativity, of enjoying relaxation and recreation.

Respect for nature may help us find solutions to the acid rain problems and make sure that our streams and rivers and also the air we breathe will cease to be poisoned. National Parks are essentially one aspect of the preservation of our environment. Those are privileged places protected by the National Parks Act for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Minister of Environment (Mrs. Blais-Grenier) will be guided by those principles and by the National Parks Act when dealing with Canada's national parks. Of course, she is also subject to certain constraints, such as available funding.

To put matters simply, this Government's expenditures must be controlled. There must therefore be some restrictions, which means that we must put our dollars where our priorities lie.

One of the priorities of the Minister of Environment is to maintain the magnificent national parks—

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired.

● (1800)

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 45 deemed to have been moved.

ENERGY—NEGOTIATIONS WITH WESTERN PROVINCES. (B) PETROLEUM AND GAS REVENUE TAX

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Question Period I asked the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) about the Government's position with respect to the petroleum and gas revenue tax and the present negotiations with the three western provinces. I pointed out to her, as something that she knows, as does everyone in Ottawa, that there are varying opinions with respect to the future of this petroleum and gas revenue tax in her own Government. She said:

I can assure the Hon. Member that he could not have heard conflicting positions on energy policy from members of this Government, because there is only one energy policy of this Government and it is supported by all of us.

That is not the case. It has not been the case for some time and as time goes along it is becoming less and less the case.

First let me go to the statement of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) who was not Prime Minister on July 8 when he spoke in Edmonton just three days before the election was called. He said:

We're going to replace the front-end PGRT with a profit-based tax system.

Nothing could be clearer than that. That was the statement.

If you look at the Progressive Conservative election platform, during the election campaign Mr. Speaker, they called for the implementation of a tax system that recognizes bottom-line profits as the bottom line for assessing taxes in order to stimulate the investment needed to bring on new energy resources. That was the Progressive Conservative platform during the election campaign.

On October 26, 1984, when asked about the timetable and the replacement of the Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources said:

Until world prices stabilize, we'd rather be slow than sorry especially on the big ticket items like exploration incentives and changes to the tax regime.

Already we are seeing a waiver of what was promised by the Prime Minister before the election campaign and what was stated in the Progressive Conservative election platform.

To go a little further, I would like to mention the statement during the election campaign of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. She said that the Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax was "one of the most devastating fiscal highjacks that has ever happened to any region of the country, and the most hated word in the West". That was the bravado of the Progressive Conservative Party prior to and during the election campaign. That is not the case now, not at all.

We have talked about the situation. There is a great deal of difficulty now. The Minister of Energy for Alberta was in Ottawa recently. He did not even meet with the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources or the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), yet he met in Toronto with the Minister of Energy for Ontario. The Minister of Energy for Ontario said "believe it or not, Lougheed is insisting that Ottawa make good their promises in the next budget, then maybe he'll talk about what he's prepared to give up". Then he spoke in terms of reduced royalties and lower natural gas prices. There is obviously a discrepancy here. I feel very strongly about this.

As a Liberal we heard criticism after criticism from the Progressive Conservative Party when it was in Opposition about the PGRT which the Liberal government had implemented. They could not say enough bad things about that tax.

● (1805)

Then the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the energy critic prior to the election, had the benefit of speaking to people in the energy sector and seeking their advice. Her statements during the election campaign and after are clear. The Prime Minister knew about the deficit. When he spoke in Newfoundland in August, he practically hit the deficit to the penny. Therefore, there can be no statement now from the Government that the deficit is the concern.