

Canada Oil and Gas Act

society—to my constituents, for example. A decade ago the people of my generation thought of things somewhat differently than we do now. We thought of sharing and of community values; we talked a bit about those things. A representative of that generation died this week. He talked about values which were different than the private pursuit of happiness and wealth.

● (2020)

In closing, I should like to quote from one of his songs which reflects what I am saying. It reads:

I read the news today, Oh boy
About a lucky man who made the grade
And tho' the news was rather sad
Well, I just had to laugh.
I saw the photograph
He blew his mind out in a car
He didn't notice that the lights had changed
A crowd of people stood and stared
They had seen his face before
But nobody was really sure if he was from the House of Lords.

It was a song which reflected a generation trying to change society into one which did not pursue money and wealth for the sake of pursuing them, but thought of sharing and a better deal for the ordinary person. That is the manner in which we will approach this bill in committee.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Savard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to speak on such an important topic as the energy future of our country. Bill C-48 before us will enable each and every one of us to benefit from new resources and will ensure security and especially fairness for all Canadians. I am privileged to represent here in this House the riding of Verdun. For the most part, Mr. Speaker, Verdun is a working class riding.

Most of my constituents show no concern over the daily workings of international politics and the way in which oil prices are set. They do not follow very closely the technical and complex negotiations regarding pricing, price per barrel, and so on. They are more anxious to know how much it will cost them to heat their house or apartment and how much more than the last one a fill-up will cost. This is a difficult period in which to develop an energy policy which will maintain reserves and satisfy consumer requirements. But that is precisely the challenge.

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the energy program we are now discussing succeeds in meeting this challenge. This program treats everyone concerned, namely the consumers, the producers or oil companies, the provinces and the federal government, equitably and fairly. Let us look at the current situation of the Canadian oil industry. We are now importing 20 per cent of our crude oil requirements and quickly eating away at our supply of less expensive western Canadian crude.

In spite of our efforts to develop our expensive domestic sources of crude oil in Newfoundland, the Beaufort Sea and the tar sands, the Canadian Petroleum Association has estimated that we shall still have to import up to one third of our domestic requirements in 1985 before our domestic production can rise to the level of self-sufficiency. As much as we try, our country will not be able to conserve or substitute enough natural gas or other energy sources to replace this oil in cases of shortages. This is why we had to develop a national energy policy which showed courage and which would create the political determination and the national will to solve these problems. First of all, we must ensure that the Canadian people realize that crude oil and natural gas are our two major natural resources. They are the foundation on which we could build a Canada whose social and economic development would be the envy of every other country of the world for decades to come. We could build a Canada which would no longer depend on uncertain oil supplies from foreign countries, a Canada which would show a surplus in international trade and whose main problem would be to fill all the jobs created in new industries from Newfoundland to British Columbia. But this result is not guaranteed, Mr. Speaker. To meet this objective, we must first of all aim for independence in the field of energy, which would make us self-sufficient and place control of our oil industry in the hands of Canadians, as it should be. This means that we must replace the perhaps insecure foreign supply sources for which we pay a price which harms our economy by secure sources of Canadian oil, which would at the same time consolidate our economy. The Canada oil and gas act administered by the National Resource Management Agency will be the main instrument for meeting these objectives.

This act is designed to promote oil and gas exploration in frontier areas to discover the substantial new reserves needed by Canada. The provisions of this legislation will give greater control to the government through its activities, which will also help promote oil and gas exploration and development.

[*English*]

To answer my friend on the other side in the NDP, and to allay the fears of all Waddellists and environmentalists, let me make it clear that this exploration will not be carried out at the expense of the fisheries and the environment. Our bill is very clear on this point.

[*Translation*]

It is a simple matter of choice, Mr. Speaker, for which the government must receive the support of the people and that means some sacrifices because of the price increases. Even if those increases are much more limited than those proposed by the Progressive Conservatives, all Canadians and not only oil companies and producing provinces would benefit from that program.

Mr. Speaker, the people in Verdun are all for a prosperous province of Alberta and believe that all producing provinces