

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, March 25, 1987

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S. O. 21

[*English*]

ENERGY

CANADIAN EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, just a little over a year ago the Government discontinued grants under the Petroleum Incentives Program after denouncing them for several years.

Today the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Masse) announced in Edmonton the Canadian Exploration and Development Incentive Program, which is a new system of incentive grants to stimulate exploration and development in the oilfields. He is providing some \$350 million in grants which will provide about \$1 billion in exploration and development and create some 20,000 jobs.

● (1405)

It is interesting that the Independent Petroleum Association indicated that the net costs, after taking into account unemployment insurance, welfare and social costs in a \$350 million program like this, would be about \$60 million for the Government. If those figures are correct, why is the Government so timid? Why did it not provide a program which would create more than \$1 billion worth of exploration and development when, over the past year, we have lost \$5 billion worth of exploration and development? If the Premier of Alberta had not threatened to split the Tory Party unless there was action on this issue, we wonder whether there would have been any program at all to assist the oil industry.

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VIA RAIL

TORONTO-GUELPH-KITCHENER-LONDON SERVICE

Mr. William C. Winegard (Guelph): Mr. Speaker, last week in this House I expressed my extreme dissatisfaction with VIA

Rail and the arrogant way in which it makes its decisions. So far I have received no response either to my letter to Mr. Hanigan or to my comments in this House.

My request to VIA is really a very simple one—and if my Liberal friends would keep quiet, it could be heard. I want all plans to remove trains or to change train times on the Toronto-Guelph-Kitchener-London run delayed until these plans have been discussed with the liaison committee in Guelph which was established for just such a purpose. If VIA will not do this on its own initiative, I ask the Minister to step in and see that common courtesy is given to the people of Guelph.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN—U.S. CONGRESSMAN'S RECORD

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) whether he approved of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) accusing U.S. Congressman Gerry Sikorski of engaging in partisan tripe when he was critical of the Canadian approach to President Reagan. I had hoped that the Prime Minister might moderate the tone of his Minister's words and, consistent with his own rhetoric about Canada-U.S. relations, show some respect for differences among friends. Instead, the Prime Minister made matters worse. He either pretended not to have heard of Sikorski before—a deliberate insult—or has not actually heard of him. I am not sure about which we should be most upset.

Yes, Mr. Sikorski has not persuaded many in his own Party to act on acid rain, but he has an extremely well-known record as one of the handful of people in the U.S. Congress who have persistently tried to get both Republicans and Democrats to wake up to this issue. For our Prime Minister either not to know or not recognize this is ignorance on a level that should make all of us embarrassed.

Perhaps Mr. Sikorski's unforgivable sin in the eyes of the Prime Minister was his devastatingly accurate comparison between the Prime Minister and Charlie Brown, who, every year, takes a kick at the football held out for him by Lucy. Every year she pulls it away and Charlie is the laughing stock. President Reagan is holding out the acid rain ball again, and the P.M. has got his kicking shoes on.