

Oil and Petroleum

compensating eastern Canada, or will withdraw that compensation entirely? This is why I want to know whether, as exports of oil are cut back and the revenue therefrom depleted, compensation will be paid out of general tax revenues. Will compensation come from, say, an excess profits tax on the oil companies, or will the government cease compensating consumers in eastern Canada?

Of course, once the price of oil in eastern Canada goes up to the world level, it will mean that the price of oil all across Canada will reach the same level, thus doubling the price of a barrel of oil in Canada. This will doubtless mean another huge increase in inflation, and Canadians may be paying \$1 or \$1.20 for a gallon of gasoline.

I should like to know what position the government is taking. Obviously the minister is showing his confidence in the parliamentary secretary being able to answer these kinds of questions, so I ask him where will we get the money to compensate eastern Canada as our revenues from the export tax decline, and for how long will this compensation be paid?

Mr. Foster: Madam Chairman, the bill provides that funds for compensation will be appropriated by parliament. Surely the question as to where funds will be found should more appropriately be addressed to the Minister of Finance rather than the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. This bill sets out a regime till the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Symes: On a point of order, Madam Chairman, the non-answers of the parliamentary secretary confirm my original view that we are wasting time trying to discuss this bill in the House today. We cannot get any definitive answers.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Allard: Madam Chairman, even if the province of Quebec has no oil resources, I am pleased to take part in the debate of Bill C-32 which deals with an extremely important matter for the future of our country. If present conditions hold, the productive capacity of oil fields in Canada will start to decline in a few years from now or in not more than four or five years.

Even if the country goes all out to transform in real supplies its immense energy potential, it will not for some

twenty years recover the freedom it now enjoys in choosing among various types of energy. Any curtailment of exploration and development would throw the country in the situation of energy shortage now experienced by various countries. The degree of government taxation is an important factor in determining the development of petroleum resources, in promoting or discouraging the exploitation of future discoveries.

According to various inquiries, it is estimated that it will take about \$50 billion in the next ten years to enable our country to regain its present independence. Our problem right now is to find new sources of energy. Since charity begins at home, it is imperative to think first about Canada's needs. As it deals with a non-renewable resource, it is urgent that the government take steps to ensure that research for the protection of existing reserves be maintained and encouraged.

[*English*]

Mr. Andre: Madam Chairman, I see it is very near the hour of adjournment, but may I ask the parliamentary secretary whether the minister will be here tomorrow? No offence intended; he has answered questions in the fashion we have become accustomed to, but could he answer that question?

Mr. Foster: Yes, Madam Chairman. It is our intention to go on with this bill tomorrow and the minister will be here. It was only because of such great co-operation from the other side that we were able to get in this very enlightening half hour this afternoon on the bill. I am sure we will go on to make a great deal of progress tomorrow, and I thank the members of the committee for this co-operation.

Mr. Andre: Then may I call it six o'clock.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order. It being six o'clock, I must rise, report progress and request leave to sit again at the next sitting of the House.

Progress reported.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): It being six o'clock I do now leave the chair until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

At 6.02 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.