

The Budget—Mr. Ferguson

closure because of higher energy prices or continued difficulties with the economy. They could say to the people: yes, we are prepared to ensure that you will have relatively cheap supplies of natural gas in the future and we will not sell them all out to the Americans. That is what they should say.

They should say one more thing, and I leave this with the minister. They should say; no ads, no polls, no hype, we are just going to level with you.

Mr. Ralph Ferguson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State, Small Businesses): Mr. Speaker, it is with a sense of relief and pride that I rise to speak in this budget debate today. My sense of relief is perhaps a reflection of what the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) said in his opening remarks during his budget presentation. I quote:

—the first budget of this new decade . . . is a budget which sets new directions for the economy—directions which will ensure both energy security and economic security for Canadians in the years ahead.

With those words, the Minister of Finance launched this nation on its long-term national energy policy. May I call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): It being six o'clock I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

[Translation]

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. When debate was interrupted at 6 p.m., the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of State for Small Businesses (Mr. Ferguson) had the floor.

● (2010)

[English]

Mr. Ferguson: Mr. Speaker, at six o'clock I had mentioned the sense of relief I felt last Tuesday evening when the Parliament of Canada was presented with a long-term national energy policy. I referred to a sense of pride, and my sense of pride is that this budget and the national energy policy contained in it will lead to greater Canadian control over our resources and economy and fulfil the commitments made by our party during the election campaign.

It is with a further sense of pride that I serve with this government when the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) bring out such a long-term policy spelling out our objectives and identifying our goals and the methodology of attainment. This budget is designed for all of Canada and to serve the long-term interests of all Canadians. It takes into consideration the need to reduce the budgetary deficit without adding undue hardships to the people of this nation, and in the

long term it will provide incentives to encourage industrial expansion in designated regions.

The 50 per cent investment credit is a massive incentive for industrial expansion, and this benefit alone will provide a climate which will lead to more jobs for more Canadians.

The energy program, founded on those three basic principles—first, security of supply and ultimate independence from the world oil markets; second, the opportunity for all Canadians to participate in the energy industry and to share in the accrued benefits; and third, the fairness of the pricing and revenue-sharing regime which recognizes the needs and rights of all Canadians—is a sound program with far-reaching effects.

But perhaps the most important aspect of this policy is the gradual implementation of price increases which will not send shock waves across our economy and trigger another inflationary spiral. Another important aspect of this policy is that it will conserve oil in the precise manner in which the gas conversion process will proceed—the Montreal-Quebec pipeline, the conversion incentives to home owners to use natural gas rather than oil and the incentives to convert to other renewable fuels.

As technology advances I believe we have the potential to make both energy and food renewable Canadian resources. The stage has been set, as responsible Canadian citizens respond to the incentives provided by converting their homes to gas and wood or biomass, and as this process proceeds, the use of oil for heating purposes will diminish, thus bringing production of oil into balance with our consumption. As this transition takes place, the need for imported oil is reduced and our balance of trade position will therefore be improved.

Rather than dismantle Petro-Canada as proposed by the previous government, we intend to strengthen and expand this company, which was established in 1975 and which is 100 per cent owned by Canadians. I was proud to hear the minister say that we will be purchasing other oil companies to ensure that at least 50 per cent of our resources are owned and controlled by Canadians by 1990. Just last week I noted that oil company profits are up by 65 per cent over last year. We want to ensure that those profits stay in Canada and benefit Canadians. In addition to strengthening this Canadian company we will be establishing a new Canadian alternative energy corporation, to be called Enertech Canada, the mandate of which will be restricted to renewable energy and conservation technology.

Mr. Blenkarn: Do you really believe that?

Mr. Ferguson: I am extremely interested in renewable energy and believe that new technology will bring about an ever-increasing use of forest and biomass products which are now going to waste. For example, two young farmers in my constituency have each developed a new and highly efficient type of furnace designed to burn garbage, crop refuse or wood. These young men have risen to accept the energy challenge of the eighties, and while these furnaces were developed to provide heat for crop-drying purposes they can be used for heating institutions, schools or small factories and shops.