

Nobody today can claim that French-speaking Quebecers are strangers to science, entrepreneurship, and leadership in the business community, the big guys in other words! There is no doubt today that French-speaking Canadians are just as competent in the marketplace as in the realm of ideas. And as if this were not enough luck in itself, natural energy resources ensure the present economic viability of Quebec as well as its future self-sufficiency. For the hydro power of Quebec, the potential of its gas and uranium reserves, the latter giving an indication of its future nuclear capability, the studies on alternate sources such as solar energy of the treatment of waste materials along with the use of a growing technology oriented manpower, all these elements hold in store a definite energy-oriented future for Quebec.

Unfortunately, just as its purely economic future had been jeopardized by the narrow conceptions of a number of previous administrations which, due to a spirit of adventure or by sheer neglect, had gone astray from the natural evolutionary trend of Quebec, this energy future is now in compromised. The federal Liberal government, by appealing to the needs of Quebecers for economic security during the referendum campaign got a reprieve or, as people said, the last chance for federalism. Those same Liberals have now forsaken them. The lack of courage and honesty of the federal Liberals, their neglect with regard to their economic and energetic fate are quite scandalous, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed true that Quebecers would rather have a constitution that is really theirs, home made in Canada and reflecting their pride. But just as they rejected the hang-ups of previous administrations which no longer cared about their real needs, or rather about their real needs as a whole, both those of the heart and of the body, Quebecers should reject the narrow views of the present federal administration. To those who claim that man does not live by bread alone, I would simply answer that they probably always had all the bread they needed and can afford to make such a selfish comment.

The economic future of Quebec will ensure the cultural and linguistic future of Quebec, it is as simple as that. They are interrelated, and Quebecers know it. This is why so many of them are thinking of getting hold of the economic levers to achieve their aims. This is why so many demagogues play also with the feelings of Quebecers when it suits them while others play with their fear in economic terms. Sometimes, some people succeed in persuading Quebecers to put their needs in terms of economic security and growth in the background and to follow their hearts. But Quebecers pull themselves together eventually. This time, however, I am afraid that they do not have enough time to do so.

Without a secure energy supply, Quebec will miss the boat. Besides, energy is the greatest challenge Canada has ever faced as well as the main factor in its future economic development. In terms of energy, Canada is behaving now as

an underdeveloped country, while it should prepare for the most glorious times in its history.

Our dependency on foreign oil imports is increasing instead of decreasing contrary to what the federal Liberal ministers generally, and especially the minister concerned, would have us believe. Quebec is dependent on foreign oil by as much as 60 per cent. Quebecers know what is going on now in Iran, Mr. Speaker. Like all other Canadians, they can watch it on television. But are Quebecers aware that not so long ago, Nova Scotia, Quebec's neighbouring province, was fully dependent on Iran for its oil supplies? And I am not talking here about the requirements of corporations or faceless groups, but what Canadians need to heat their homes and fill up their gas tanks.

Canada is importing oil from abroad, from Venezuela, Mexico and Saudi Arabia. It is in the latter area that Iran and Iraq are fighting their war. These supplies of fuel oil and gasoline are not intended for western Canada or even Ontario for the most part, but for Quebec and the maritimes. Should there be another war, another revolution, like in Iran, or even a natural plague like an earthquake, where would Quebec find its oil? Today Quebec depends heavily on oil for its heating, automobiles and industry.

● (1700)

An hon. Member: Where were you last summer?

Mr. La Salle: I am used, Mr. Speaker, to hearing certain comments from the other side but they are also invited to express their concern about the absence today of guarantees of self-sufficiency in the area of energy. Quebec depends on oil for 75 per cent of its heating. Cars run only on oil and industry uses mainly oil. Indeed, 78 per cent of all energy consumed in Quebec comes from oil. Some 200,000 barrels of oil enter Quebec every day from foreign countries; 300,000 come from the producing provinces in western Canada.

Is the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources at least concerned with making sure the supplies coming from within this country are assured, as he is certainly not able to assure the supplies from outside countries? No, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources aggravates the dialogue between Ottawa and the producing provinces. At the same time, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) laughs at the complaints of the producing provinces which want to obtain maximum protection for their resources and thus assure the economic welfare of their people. Those gentlemen who are supposed to be representing the interests of Canadians and Quebecers so passionately are insulting the oil producing provinces of western Canada that must nevertheless heat Quebec homes this winter and enable Quebecers to go to work.

During the last election, Mr. Speaker, Quebecers who were convinced by the Liberals in Ottawa that to pay 18 cents more a gallon for their oil was a useless sacrifice will not have any oil for their cars no matter what price they are willing to pay.