

Energy Supplies

Mr. Gillespie: I would be pleased to answer the hon. member's question at the end of my remarks.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The minister said that we already have the power. Under the legislation setting up Petro-Canada—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that the hon. minister has stated already that he will accept the question at the end of his remarks.

Mr. Gillespie: I would be very pleased to take questions at the end of my remarks, but I should like to deal with the issues raised in the debate on this particular amendment. I have indicated that the power already exists, and therefore I can see no reason why we should put into this bill a particular provision which does not provide any additional power. I think the proposer of the amendment would acknowledge that. That is what I took from his remarks, that it gives the government an option. The government has that option without putting this in.

Mr. Symes: Not true.

Mr. Gillespie: Yes, the government has that option. The events of the last few weeks indicate that the government has that power. It can exercise that option by causing Petro-Canada to enter into negotiations with Petroleos de Venezuela, the national oil company of Venezuela. Let it be understood that that is an initiative the government is taking, an initiative for which the official opposition criticized the government, specifically the energy critic, the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence).

Mr. Lawrence: You are right.

Mr. Gillespie: As the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) said in his remarks a moment ago, the position of the Conservative party on the functions and place of Petro-Canada at this time are absolutely incredible. I think that is a generous remark; I think it is absolutely ludicrous. The hon. member for Northumberland-Durham noted in this debate that the multinational oil companies probably had not always served Canada's best interests. I should like to quote from page 4256 of *Hansard* dated March 16. When the hon. member was referring to multinational corporations, he said the following:

On many occasions they certainly have not acted in Canada's best interest. They may not even be acting in Canada's best interest right now. They are obviously acting in their own best interest. That is what they are there for. There is no question about that, but I suggest that at times of shortage or impending shortage the one and only asset we can use in the national interest as far as multinationals are concerned is their knowledge and experience and their access to these international pools—

He went on to say:

The very time when there is an impending shortage in the international field is certainly not the best time to change horses.

That is an incredible position for a responsible opposition party to take at the very moment when we are faced with shortages, serious international shortages and additional shortages created by the actions of one of the multinational corpo-

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

rations. The official opposition argued that we can place more of our confidence in the multinational corporations, and that we should not use Petro-Canada, the national oil company of Canada, to protect and preserve Canadian interests. That is what the hon. member said—that this is not the time for Petro-Canada to act in Canada's interests. He is willing to accept the multinationals even though he may suspect that they are not behaving in Canada's interests.

Of course, this is the same view expressed by the Conservative party when we discussed the first amendment, the one which would place Petro-Canada as one of the representatives of the federal government on the standing group for emergency questions in the International Energy Agency. At that time in the debate they put on the record that, if they were the government, they would not see any reason to use Petro-Canada to protect and guard Canadian interests when the international allocation system will be implemented by multinational corporations. It is quite clear that the official opposition is consistent. It has been against Petro-Canada from the day it was created. Members of the Conservative party voted against it in the House. They have been consistent ever since in damning it, attacking it and arguing that, if they were to form the government, they would destroy it and get rid of it as a policy instrument.

The hon. member for Northumberland-Durham had more to say. At page 4256 he indicated that he would effectively let other countries get in ahead as far as Mexican supplies are concerned. He argued that this was the wrong time for Petro-Canada to be negotiating with Pemex, the national oil company of Mexico, because this would be against the Canadian national interest in some way. The hon. member does not seem to realize that most other countries are lined up trying to get a piece of the Mexican action. He does not seem to realize that Exxon Corporation, acting in its own interests and perhaps to some extent in the interests of the United States, has been lined up trying to get a piece of Mexican production. The hon. member does not seem to realize that the French government has sent over trade missions because it wants to get several hundreds of thousands of barrels a day of Mexican oil. The French government regards Mexican oil as a secure source. The hon. member does not seem to realize that the Spanish government, the German government, the Israeli government, or the Japanese government, are interested. The Japanese government is after 300,000 barrels a day. The negotiations between these other countries and Mexico would have taken place without a Canadian negotiator at the table if the Conservative party had had its way.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gillespie: The Conservative party has not been following the international energy situation. It is without policies in this area; it is blinded by its pathological opposition to, even hate for, Petro-Canada. The Conservative party has yet to find a way of putting Canada first. If the official opposition had thought a little more about Canada, had relied less on others