

*Canada Oil and Gas Act*

Energy Program. The government has not yet seen fit to disclose the total ramifications of that program. Since much of its import remains shrouded in the bowels of the Langevin Building on Wellington Street, members are at a decided disadvantage when assessing and discussing the total impact of the legislation.

I have been here long enough, Mr. Speaker, to sense danger in what I see in this bill. The hon. member who just spoke mentioned icebergs. We do not know whether we are seeing the tip of the iceberg in this bill or the iceberg itself—or perhaps even an ice age in energy development in Canada. Certainly when we consider the flight of capital and business skills and acumen and equipment from this country as a result of measures of this nature, we know that we might as well be approaching an ice age in energy development.

This is a massive piece of legislation which contemplates nothing less than direct government intervention in oil and gas exploration, not merely in a regulatory sense but as a major player with a large pile of chips to be bought and paid for by the other players.

If that were all the bill did, it would be suspect on that ground alone but that is only one aspect of a program which remains to be disclosed in its entirety. When one considers that and senses the danger in that, it becomes more than merely disturbing.

● (2020)

Taking the bill as it now stands, as has been said on this side on more than one occasion, it represents in our Canadian history an unprecedented intervention in the area of free enterprise by the federal government. It is not going to stop there and that is obvious. If this bill is the thin edge of the wedge, one fears, not simply wonders, what the whole wedge will be like. Knowing this government's proclivities, led by the man it is led by, toward ever-increasing state control, ever-penetrating state intervention, ever-augmented meddling and tinkering, its grandiose schemes, illusory programs, gung-ho tilting at self-manufactured and constituted windmills, one can only view this massive takeover legislation with not simply a measure of uneasiness but with downright fear.

It is so viewed by those in the petroleum industry. There is ample evidence of that despite the repeated, consistent efforts of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources before the summer recess to pooh-pooh those facts disclosed to him by those of us on this side. It is so viewed by the people of the north, and you will have to accept my word for that. We regard this intervention as one being accomplished by a government shod in hobnailed boots which are trampling over all our future aspirations to become a meaningful part of this country. It is so viewed by Canada's native peoples, the northern Indian people and the Inuit. The Inuit Tapirisat made representations before the committee to that effect. They regard it as a sloughing off; nay, an outright betrayal of native rights, and in that they have the support of 100 per cent of those Canadians who live above the 60th parallel.

Figures released a week or ten days ago show the extent of this government's involvement in gas and oil at present. There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever, and there should not be in any other mind, that with this control bill, and that is what it is, to back them, the present involvement, considerable as it is, will pyramid in the usual grandiose way of all of this government's undertakings.

One only has to reflect on that pyramidal syndrome when one considers the deficit when they took office in 1968 and the deficit today. This kind of legislation has much to do with that, and I will get to that if I have time at my disposal.

Through Petro-Canada and the Canada Development Corporation this government now has holdings in Panarctic Oils of 45 per cent, Westcoast Transmission of 25.2 per cent, Syncrude of 17 per cent, Alsands Energy of 16 per cent, the Arctic Pilot Project of 37.5 per cent, Petrofina of 100 per cent, Canstar Oilsands of 50 per cent, and it is involved in the Polar Gas Project. They try to set us at ease over here, but they are not just in bed with but married without the benefit of clergy to those to my left who at least, Sir, are honest about their political philosophies, and that is more than I can say for that honourable tribe over there.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Nielsen:** Let us look at the Canada Development Corporation for a moment. It has holdings in CDC Oil and Gas and the Aquitaine Company of Canada Ltd., and this is in addition to that long list I have already disclosed. This activity, already considerable, will multiply—will burgeon—when this bill becomes law because the government automatically becomes owner of 25 per cent of all new fields. My colleagues to the left over here want that to be 50 per cent. This has been described as confiscatory by the Canadian oil industry, and that is putting it mildly. I like to describe those who support this legislation for what they really are—carpetbaggers. In what other area of national enterprise, I ask hon. members opposite, does the federal government take on itself to award itself 25 per cent ownership without compensating those who are licensed to develop and explore it?

It adds up to this: You boys, they say over there, do the work, take the chances, take the risks, spend the money, and we are going to grab the profit. The bill itself recognizes the injustice of this by providing incentives specifically in compensation for the 25 per cent grab. That provision, however, does not remove the heavy hand of government control from the exploration helm, and this obviously is the real purpose of the measure, to revert to the state an element of direct control and intervention in the day to day operations of this industry.

The worrying thing is that the measure of state control inherent here would do credit to a government in the iron curtain countries. And that may not be all; taken in conjunction with the other elements of the so-called National Energy Program, the whole of which remains to be exposed, the result may be disquieting indeed to believers in the free enterprise system itself and to those of us who place a value on individual initiative and entrepreneurship. In fact, as I have already