

Petro-Canada. If he made a mistake, the entire country would suffer devastatingly.

I ask the House to consider for a moment the threat of the multinationals. When one takes away all the hyperbole surrounding multinationals, one realizes that they are a threat to our sovereignty. They can do and say things which offend us as a sovereign nation. We feel offended that companies headquartered elsewhere could have such a profound effect on the country and we can merely react. We in this party found that offensive, and the country finds it offensive as well.

Mr. Pinard: Prove it.

Mr. Andre: I am getting to that. If we proceed with this motion and Petro-Canada is our sole purchaser abroad, one must think about the restrictions on our sovereignty and on our freedom to act in foreign affairs. Last week the president of OPEC made a suggestion that they should require that all purchasers of OPEC oil and gas must adhere to and support the Palestinian position in the Middle East. Can one imagine what would happen if our state-owned oil company purchased all our offshore oil from the Middle East, from Arab countries?

An hon. Member: Why would they do that?

Mr. Gillespie: The hon. member should rethink that comment.

Mr. Andre: Again the minister is showing that his intelligence level is below average. If we are to have an oil purchaser, presumably he will buy from all of the selling nations. Is the minister in all honesty suggesting that we should deal with one country only, and be totally at risk in terms of the policies of that country? Of course not. It will be spread around.

Mr. Gillespie: You suggested that we should buy all our oil from the Middle East.

Mr. Andre: No. We would buy it from the Middle East, Nigeria, Mexico, Venezuela and so on.

Mr. Gillespie: Now you are changing your comments.

Mr. Andre: If the minister would listen and perhaps read the newspapers, he would have seen the quote from the president of OPEC suggesting the OPEC nations require that the nations purchasing OPEC oil support the Palestinian cause. Is the minister prepared to stand in Etobicoke and say, "We will sacrifice sovereignty in terms of an independent foreign policy. We are quite prepared to say we are sorry to Israel but we cannot support you any more because our national petroleum company will be cut off from its supply of OPEC oil, and that will be too devastating to the country"? Is the minister prepared to say that in all honesty?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) rises on a point of order.

Energy Supplies

Mr. Symes: Mr. Speaker, will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Andre: I will answer the hon. member's question in a moment. The member refers to the threat of the multinationals in terms of our sovereignty. I recognize and agree with the threat, except this very important fact cannot be defended: we know what motivates the multinationals. Profits motivate the multinationals, as they motivate Canadian companies or anyone in business. We know the rules under which they will operate. Therefore our regulations, laws and procedures can accommodate this known behaviour. Would some member in the House like to predict how Ayatollah Khomeini will behave? Can some hon. member say with absolute certainty how future governments of Venezuela will behave? Can some member predict how Saudi Arabia will behave?

Some hon. Members: And Exxon?

Mr. Andre: Exxon and the multinationals, which hon. members opposite speak about, will seek to maximize their profits. Did they not hear that? Did they not understand that? I am not surprised.

My second point is that all these companies have assets in the country over which the government can exercise authority. The government has a lever which it does not have in terms of offshore countries.

An hon. Member: Why?

Mr. Andre: Because the minister has not exercised the lever.

An hon. Member: How?

Mr. Andre: If he wanted to he could. It is wrong for the minister to suggest that Petro-Canada will bail us out through Venezuela and Mexico. When we get down to the bottom line, it is offensive to think of the Department of External Affairs in its new building on Sussex Drive with hundreds of high-priced very capable people. I am led to believe this, but I do not have much to do with them. The Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce has trade commissioners all over the world. There is an ambassador in Venezuela. The Canadian Commercial Corporation was created for the purpose of state-to-state business deals of the kind being talked about. Why does the Department of External Affairs not do its job and negotiate with the Venezuelan government? Why do our trade commissioners not sign a trade agreement with Venezuela if that is what we want? Why do we not use the Canadian Commercial Corporation?

Every time we find out the government has not been doing its job, why is a new department, agency, Crown corporation or layer of bureaucracy created? It is given a fancy name; and the government says that it will cure the problem. These lads must be tripping over each other. What is the trade commissioner in Venezuela doing? If he is not negotiating in Caracas in terms of oil then we should get him out of there and put someone in who knows how to do the job. What is our ambassador doing in Venezuela? Why do we need another