

Canada Petroleum Resources Act

Environment. It has had a very major impact. In fact members of that Department have sat on the committee as well as those from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

We are maintaining what has gone on before as well as, we believe, improving it. We must remember that the objective research is into the social and physical environments and it is oil and gas specific. Inasmuch as the oil and gas industry are funded, we feel that the Ministers of EMR and DIAND should retain responsibility in close consultation with the Department of the Environment, and they have been. It has proceeded extremely well.

For my hon. friend, the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway (Mr. Waddell), to say we did not listen to suggestions regarding representation on the committee and we did not do anything about it, is very unfair. The Hon. Member knows full well that after representation was made and after a discussion took place in committee the Government brought forward an amendment. It is found on page 37 of the Bill. That clause states, in part, that notwithstanding subsections (2) and (4), each Minister may appoint from the public one member to the board. That is a provision which the Grits did not have in their Bill. The Hon. Member must also admit that it was not included in the original Bill. Only after representation was made by the aboriginal peoples, by the Hon. Member and by others, did the Government bring forward this amendment.

● (1540)

I think the Hon. Member would like to be fair in his representations. This is something which may not have gone as far as he would have liked, or as far as others would have liked. However, an amendment to allow members of the public to sit on this environmental studies board was proposed.

Again, it is a divided area because of the responsibility of the two ministries. I will not enter into debate with respect to the pros and cons of that. That is a fact of life at the present time. Therefore, there are two accounts. If it is an environmental study which pertains exclusively to the north, north of 60° under the responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, then the money will be drawn from its fund. If in fact it concerns lands which are controlled under the purview of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, then the money is drawn from that fund. If in fact it is a study which pertains to the over-all energy situation which would affect frontier lands under the jurisdiction of both ministries, then there will be an appropriate draw from both funds.

I do not want to get into a debate on whether the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development or whether the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources should be responsible for all frontier lands. That is why this is set up in this manner. This is why we feel we have assured representation from the general public.

I get a kick out of the Hon. Member when he talks about people in the north and the fact that we are always appointing people from the south to represent them. Earlier in the House today he admitted that he, along with his Liberal friend Ian Scott, the present Attorney General of Ontario, were the solicitors of record on the Berger Commission which was doing all the work in the north.

Mr. Waddell: That is something we learned.

Mr. McDermid: They obviously thought that legal expertise was better from the south than it was from the north. The Hon. Member accepted that and probably made his family fortune in doing that work.

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a couple of observations in this very interesting debate. First, I would like to congratulate the Parliamentary Secretary for his thoughtful analysis. He is quite right when he says that there is a new proposed clause in the Bill whereby one member would be appointed to the board at the discretion of each Minister and that one person could be drawn from among the local people, as recommended by the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway (Mr. Waddell). Inevitably, the following question comes to mind. Why restrict the number in such a way? Why not leave it to the Minister to make appointments according to any number that may be suitable according to the skill and talent available at any given time? The idea put forward by the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway and by the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys (Mr. MacLellan) that we should open up the doors to permit the consideration of local people certainly commands a great deal of attention. They also suggest that this approach should not be limited to one person alone.

The other point put forward quite eloquently and touched upon by the Parliamentary Secretary was with respect to the merits of having one fund rather than dividing it along jurisdictional lines, which at times are very fuzzy and difficult to sort out in a logical manner. Whatever touches upon the environment and upon social considerations is so comprehensive that it cannot really be allocated to two specific Departments alone. The idea that the fund be one fund has a great deal of merit. I support the interventions made by both the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys and by the Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway that this merger be brought about. When one looks at the impact of the oil and gas industry on the north—and as the Parliamentary Secretary reminded us we are talking specifically about the oil and gas industry—one realizes that there are fairly far-reaching environmental as well as social consequences.

While we debate this Bill we can read about the consequences of the withdrawal of the oil and gas industry from places such as Tuktoyaktuk and other locations in the north. When there is such an economic impact affecting a fragile region of the country, its appearance as well as its disappearance bring about some profound and, at times, disastrous consequences. In the present situation the withdrawal of the oil