

*Oil and Petroleum*

than hiding things in innuendoes and subtleties. We urge the government to put an end to this confrontation so that Canada can look forward to a future of which we are capable and, I believe, deserving.

**Mr. Milne:** Mr. Chairman, I am interested in energy, and have been for quite some time. I have followed with interest this bill and other energy measures before the House since being elected. I had not intended to enter this debate but having listened for some time to the discussion I feel I should rise and speak to some of the points about which I feel very strongly.

I understand that hon. members from the producing provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan speak as they do concerning this bill in an effort to get the best situation they can for their provinces. One would expect them to do this and I respect them for doing so, although I do not agree with most of the points of view they have put forward. I am absolutely astounded, however, at the role played regarding this bill by hon. members opposite who come from eastern Canada. I cannot understand how the Conservative Party has solicited their support in filibustering this bill. The Conservatives have openly admitted they will filibuster it. Their spokesman on energy matters, the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain, conceded as much in a story written by Victor Mackie in the *Ottawa Journal* last Monday. When asked if his party intended to filibuster the bill, the hon. member is quoted as replying: "Yes, I suppose, although politicians don't like that word".

I ask the Conservative members from Ontario, Quebec and the maritimes if they really understand this bill and if they truly appreciate the implications if it should not go through. I should like to know how they would react to this bill being withdrawn and therefore letting the price of oil in eastern Canada go up to \$11.70 from \$6.50, and the price of natural gas perhaps doubling. I ask what effect would that have on industry and agriculture in their ridings, and what reaction they would receive from their constituents. It was not very long ago that the hon. member for Norfolk, on the opposition side of the House, asked a question about a letter from Union Gas saying there was some question concerning security of supply of natural gas for a hospital in Simcoe, Ontario, and raising a question about the price of natural gas to the hospital.

I ask why they would raise such a question and still filibuster this bill, because this is the government's answer to the energy question in eastern Canada. I cannot understand why the Tory members from Ontario have not spoken on this bill, or why in their caucus they have not opposed the filibuster undertaken by the western members. I am sure they must have heard rumblings in their ridings concerning security of supply of gas and what the future price might be, as well as the impact created if the price of Canadian petroleum went to \$11.70. Despite these concerns in their ridings, it is obvious that the Tory members will knuckle under to the filibuster tactics of the Alberta members and argue against a bill which would ensure for their constituents and all Canadians, a reasonable and fair price for oil and natural gas in the future.

[Mr. Andre.]

The basis of this bill is to place the federal government in the position where it can consider the interests of producers and consumers. We are not opposed to raising the price of petroleum, if necessary. We are not opposed to bringing the price of natural gas closer to its value. But we are saying that someone must mediate this argument and that it should be the federal government. If hon. members opposite intend to filibuster this bill, I suggest that before doing so they look at the *Toronto Star* for November 2 and read what Pan-Alberta Gas is doing in regard to gas, the reserves it is tying up, and some of the marketing policies it would like to have. In fact, it is quoted in the *Globe and Mail* of November 5, by the same organization, that even in the really energy deficient United States, one could not afford to buy natural gas at the price at which they want to market it.

Again I ask eastern members of the party opposite how they can rationalize their position with their constituents if the bill should not pass? I think the most astounded I have been, as a member of this House, was before the budget when I heard some of the members from Alberta putting their case, and at the same time I saw the Leader of the Opposition calmly sitting there going over his Christmas card list. This was at a time when members of his own party were seriously threatening the industrial base of the maritimes. I cannot understand how that was leadership. He seemed to have no interest in his own part of Canada and sat there working on his Christmas cards while this subject was being debated.

I want to speak a little about what this means, for example, to Ontario. If this bill should not pass, the first thing that would disappear in Ontario is the greenhouse industry. It is a very large and viable industry which grows cucumbers, tomatoes, flowers, and so on. Energy represents 50 per cent of the costs of the industry. It is a marginal business now, which competes with imports from the United States. Are these members saying we should import this food and have food costs go up even further, or do they really care about the greenhouse industry, particularly any member who might have greenhouses in his riding?

The productivity of agriculture has increased greatly. Agriculture in this country is one of the most productive in the world. One reason for this is the major shift to corn from legumes and hay crops in eastern Canada. Energy, in terms of natural gas and propane, is essential for drying corn. This year the moisture content of western corn was as high as 50 per cent. How will these members answer their constituents when they bring forward questions concerning the high cost of propane and the fact that they cannot be sure they will have natural gas to dry corn? What about the cost of fertilizer? It has already gone up dramatically. Do these members want this cost to almost double again?

I will tell the committee what has happened in Ontario. A number of farmers have already cut back on the amount of fertilizer they use and there has been a pretty dramatic decrease in the yield of corn this year on farms where this has been done. Surely the strategy of this government which must be supported by members on the other side is to increase our food supply. If we are to have increased