

process. Rather than follow such a course, I believe we should be setting up long-term arrangements along the lines of those with Mexico and contemplated with Venezuela. If we look around the world we find that most of the OPEC countries operate through state-controlled oil companies. Rather than inject Petro-Canada into a situation of shortage, which would only cause confusion, we should be using the corporation along the lines already envisaged, that is, to negotiate for long-term supply contracts. If the multinationals want to enter into back-to-back contracts for transporting the oil, that is perhaps acceptable as long as we have the long-term contracts, state by state, to ensure supplies to Canada.

In the circumstances, I do not see the advantage of this amendment. It would be bringing in confusing factors at a time when supplies were already threatened.

The Conservative party, as we know, has stated its intention to destroy Petro-Canada and utilize the services of the Canadian Commercial Corporation or some similar agency to arrange supplies of oil. Such a system would have at least one obvious disadvantage inasmuch as the Canadian Commercial Corporation has no expertise in the field of transportation of oil or, indeed, for the negotiation of long-term supplies. On the other hand, Petro-Canada has already entered into arrangements with Petro-Ven, the Venezuelan national petroleum company, with regard to the supply of oil, and will be putting together long-term supply contracts.

If this were strictly a question of putting out tenders for supplies, the Department of Supply and Services could do the job, but there is obviously a great deal more involved. At this point, Petro-Canada, even though it is a new corporation, is building up expertise in negotiating these long-term contracts and it would obviously be to our disadvantage to place the Canadian Commercial Corporation in the position of trying to deal with a commodity with which they had no experience. On the other hand, as I say, Petro-Canada would have a representative on the energy supply allocation board and on the standing committee set up under the International Energy Agency. Canada would have good representation on these agencies and international bodies, placing it in a good position to know what action should be taken in the event of an emergency. So we have these two points to consider.

We are, of course, aware of the naive and lackadaisical attitude taken by the government of Ontario. A few nights ago in the committee they were saying there was no real need for this bill. They never complained while the former bill was in position during the past several years; they never complained about the preparations which were going on during those years. They certainly put before the committee a very naive suggestion that the bill was not needed and that we could carry out exchanges with the United States. Mr. Speaker, if we look at the situation in the United States we find they are importing about half of their crude oil requirement, something like eight million barrels a day out of the 16 million barrels they use. It is not hard to imagine a scenario in which U.S. stocks would be run down very quickly and none would be available for swaps with Canada.

Energy Supplies

The policy advocated by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) is to build a larger pipeline without ensuring supplies from the tar sands deposits or elsewhere so that adequate use might be made of the line.

I see the official opposition are suggesting they are ready, now, to vote on this amendment. I would not want to delay our progress by any further remarks so I shall be pleased to sit down and allow the amendment to come to a vote.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Yorkton-Melville.

Mr. Nystrom: Sault Ste. Marie is beautiful but Yorkton is more beautiful.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Come, come!

Mr. Nystrom: I was certainly referring to the town, not the hon. member.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, after that enthusiastic speech by the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) I just want to make one or two comments.

Mr. Benjamin: It was a real barnstormer.

An hon. Member: A funeral dirge!

● (2050)

Mr. Nystrom: Anyway, I am very surprised at the minister, at his parliamentary secretary, and at the government opposite. One would think from their rhetoric in the House that the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) has moved a motion that is radical and revolutionary and that will turn the world upside down, but I remind them that the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie has moved a motion which just adds another option to what the government can do. It says that Petro-Can can be the sole purchaser of oil in an emergency. There is nothing obligatory about that, it just says they can be. Judging from some of the comments that were made by the hon. member for Algoma one would think that this motion is a radical motion which would tie the hands of the government.

I would like to make one or two other comments about what the minister himself said. He criticized members on this side of the House for moving a motion which had already been put forward in committee, and he said it is repetitive. If all we did in the House was original and new, perhaps the House would be a lot further ahead, but that is not the case. There are many things we discuss in the House which are repetitive. I think the point made by the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie is a damn good point which should be repeated over and over again until the government finally accepts it.

The minister hangs his hat on the word "may". He said that Petro-Can under the Petro-Canada Act may go into negotiations with other countries to purchase oil and crude directly