

Income Tax

running off to Washington and other places. It had no policy.

That is exactly the kind of approach they have to transportation: there seems to be no national transportation policy. It seems to me that the government has the same kind of approach with regard to regional disparities. The first time I heard the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) speaking in the election campaign of 1968 he said that he would work toward eliminating regional disparities. Here we are, six years later, hearing the Prime Minister, when speaking last week or two weeks ago to some well-heeled Liberals in Montreal, saying that he is still working at eliminating regional disparities. There seems to be no policy with respect to this matter.

In the area of housing the government moves from crisis to crisis. It is always reacting. There seems to be no policy with respect to the environment, and no national policy with regard to the exploitation of non-renewable resources in this country. Whenever the government speaks about exploiting the resources of this country, it always talks in terms of money and in terms of job creation. There are other permanent, lasting factors which are not receiving sufficient attention and which are very close to the bottom of the priority list. Such a case has recently come to light. On Tuesday, February 4, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) told the House:

I am most happy, Madam Speaker, to be able to inform parliament and the Canadian public this evening that the Syncrude project will go ahead.

He then proceeded to tell us how the project will go ahead—at any cost to the Canadian taxpayer and with full profits going to the oil companies. It must be admitted that this Liberal government is consistent with every other Liberal government of which I have had experience in this country. When faced with a choice between a careful, planned policy development or a knee-jerk reaction, the Liberals will always sell out the Canadian people. The illusion of policy may be there but the substance never is; and, of course, they are always willingly accompanied by the Tories to my right. Just look at the farce which has been played out in this House of elected representatives of the people of Canada over the last couple of weeks. Last Tuesday night the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources announced the scheme whereby the Canadian people will be forced into financial support, to the tune of \$600 million plus, of a project which is at best dubious and at worst a complete disaster. What was the response from the official opposition? The response was a nice little speech from the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) who was clearly caught on the horns of a dilemma. He said that the plan was a small step forward, but a dangerous one, though not too dangerous; risky, but not too risky; messy, but not too messy; insupportable, but supportable because there is no other choice. On one hand he worried that the government is going to discriminate against other companies by not giving them the same consideration Syncrude will get, while on the other hand he suggested it is time, and I quote, "to give an opportunity to Canadians as individuals to own this country."

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

● (1650)

Then we move on to look at what the leader of this so-called opposition has been asking about: he wants to know, for Pete's sake, if other companies will get Syncrude's pricing and taxation arrangements, and other matters of earthshaking importance such as if and how technology will be made available to Canada. In other words, this so-called official opposition which sits to my right has been so compromised by the wheeling and dealing their provincial governments have engaged in that they have no alternative but to sit on their hands and hope that this whole thing will just blow over.

The Liberal opposition party of Ontario is not so shy. Let us consider what provincial Liberal leader Robert Nixon had to say with regard to Ontario's participation in the Syncrude project. Last Thursday he said that this project could become, and I quote, "some sort of open-ended rat hole down which \$100 million would just be the beginning." So there we have it, Mr. Speaker, with regards to the Liberals and the Tories. To paraphrase: "Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive!" It is not as though Tweedledee and Tweedledum have not, between the two of them, had more than 100 years to arrive at an energy policy for this country. In his statement to the House on February 6 on the subject of conservation, the minister began by saying that the actions of OPEC had, and I quote, "propelled us into an era where the world's undisciplined appetite would force it to turn to less accessible and thereby more expensive energy and material resources."

The minister also stated: "At the beginning of this decade the Government of Canada foresaw the dawning of this new era, but we did not foresee how rapidly we would enter it. I do not think anyone did." What a lot of boloney! The minister well knows that the signs of an impending crisis have been confronting us since the 1960s, at the very least. What he really means is that this government always chooses to ignore the obvious until it is upon us in crisis proportions. This Syncrude scheme is just more of what we got in the way of an energy policy from this government back in December of 1973. I said then that this government falls prey to expediency of the rawest kind. I said then that we should have brought this bunch down on the issue of resource ownership, and the events of the last two weeks have been an overwhelming indictment of the policy bankruptcy evident in this cabinet.

Let us look at what we have in Syncrude. We have a situation whereby the federal government will be contributing \$300 million, Alberta will be contributing \$200 million and Ontario will be contributing \$100 million, for a 30 per cent equity in the project. That is, of course, if the projected cost of Syncrude remains unchanged—a projected cost which has already, from its original estimate, been inflated by 340 per cent. What do we get in return? Apparently we will get oil, but at internationally-oriented prices. What this means is that the Canadian taxpayer will be paying to get his own oil out of the ground so that he can buy it at prices set by other countries. He will get equipment for the project, but from Bechtel Construction Company which is an American company. The benefits which should go to a Canadian company for such major