

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Ron Stewart (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, this day's sitting will be extended by 25 minutes.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA PETROLEUM RESOURCES ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Tuesday, May 20, 1986, consideration of the motion of Miss Carney that Bill C-92, an Act to regulate interest in petroleum in relation to frontier lands, to amend the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act and to repeal the Canada Oil and Gas Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I cannot say I am pleased to stand today and participate in this debate on Bill C-92, because I believe that Members of Parliament have a responsibility to deal with matters in this House that are relevant, contemporary, and have an impact on Canadian society now or in the future.

The dilemma I have in holding Bill C-92 in my hand, which received first reading December 2, 1985, a scant five months ago, is that I have the overwhelming impression that I am dealing with something pulled off a dusty shelf in a long forgotten museum. We are often told that a week can be a lifetime in politics. I am sure the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney) is feeling that 20 weeks has represented many lifetimes for her.

This Bill is no more relevant to what is currently happening in Canada's energy patch today than is the horse and rider relevant to the way in which we try and deliver mail today. The Bill is out of date. It does not deal with the reality of Canada's energy patch, May 21, 1986. That Bill was brought in in the Government's great attempt to deregulate the energy industry, in the words of the Minister, to set it free, in the words of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), to introduce a brand new day to Canada; in the words of the Minister, to set free the entrepreneurial spirit and create 300,000 jobs; and in her words, not to treat the industry as the proverbial milk cow. All of those words may have been highfaluting, sounding quite impressive five months ago when this Bill was brought in, but today this Bill simply will not wash.

Canada Petroleum Resources Act

What has happened over the last 20 weeks in this country? What kind of industry is it that the Minister has set free to exist entirely at the mercy of the vagaries of the market? What kind of industry is it today? Is it the big powerful, bruising, bullheaded oil and gas patch that we knew in Canada six months ago? Is it the industry where they really meant it when they said "what's a million" and, more importantly sometimes, "what's a billion"? Is it the industry that last year saw 14 rigs operating in the oil and gas sector in east coast Canada, and tens of thousands of jobs? Is it the industry that the Premier of Newfoundland said would foreshadow the great day of the economic renewal that would happen in the Province of Newfoundland? Is it the industry that built up a multibillion dollar heritage fund in the Province of Alberta?

The answer to all those questions is no. It is not the same industry for which the Minister designed this Bill. That is why the Bill is irrelevant and should be withdrawn.

We know by looking at the numbers over the last 20 weeks that things have dramatically changed. Twenty weeks ago, 30 weeks ago the oil and gas industry was talking about \$11.2 billion in expenditures in 1986. That projection has been revised down to \$6 billion, a reduction of \$5.2 billion in expenditures, service industries and associated jobs. According to public announcements to date, personnel reductions will exceed 4,000. I am not talking about 4,000 seasonal jobs or 4,000 part-time jobs about which the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) likes to beat her chest. I am not talking about 4,000, 10-week jobs that the Government puts together through its job development program. These reductions involve 4,000 full time, highly paid, highly skilled jobs that are essential for providing long term maintenance of this industry. Not only are those people unemployed, the best of them are taking their talents and skills out of the country.

● (1540)

The Government, when confronted with a \$5 billion reduction in investment and a cut in 4,000 man-years of employment, holds up Bill C-92 that it introduced 20 weeks ago as its answer to the problem. The Government is frozen to its commitment to something that no longer exists. It wants to live in a world of an energy patch that is no longer relevant and ignore an almost 50 per cent cut in investment and a reduction of 4,000 personnel. That is simply not acceptable.

I suggest that Canadians have expressed clearly their belief that since oil and gas are their natural resources the Government of Canada should make a number of provisions for the oil and gas industry in Canada. It is a crucial industry that is as vital to the future prosperity of this country as the blood that beats within all of us is vital to our own individual health and welfare. Canadians demand security of supply. They do not want to be subject to the whims of the OPEC cartel. They demand that our country have enough energy resources to meet our needs so that we will not be subject to blackmail. While Canadians are demanding security of supply, the Minister has said that this goal is as irrelevant as her Bill.