

Oil and Gas

the purpose of entering into these long-term arrangements and to ensure that oil is earmarked for the Canadian people and equitably distributed to all regions that need it. I am not wedded to any name; if the minister does not want to call it a national petroleum corporation, he can call it any other name. He could call it "Macdonald's Somersault No. 7".

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Macdonald's hamburgers.

Mr. Douglas: Call it whatever you like. The minister said the other day that a national petroleum corporation would not meet our immediate problems. I suggest that he is quite wrong. A national petroleum corporation that could now enter into negotiations with Venezuela and some of the African countries might be the solution to provide us with the extra half million barrels a day that we desperately need if there are not to be a great many hardships experienced in eastern Canada.

In his statement of last Thursday, the minister said, "Although it is recognized that security of supply for priority oil users must be protected, the government is reluctant to interfere at this stage with the normal marketing arrangements in the industry." The normal marketing arrangements in the industry must take second place to the needs of the people in eastern Canada. The minister and the government are eventually going to be compelled to set up a national petroleum corporation. If I may adopt the slogan which the government had some years ago for its winter works program: Why wait for spring, do it now.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, the debate tonight is part of a recurring debate that has been going on in the House since May 28 and in the committee on energy, mines and resources since February. Most of us in this House who listened to the hon. member who introduced the motion for the subject under discussion agree with almost everything he said, because at this particular time it is not a matter that can be dealt with satisfactorily by looking at it purely as an opportunity for partisan advantage.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Last Thursday evening I said I was deeply disappointed at the evidence I saw in the September 4 statement by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), and the backing-off from that statement last Thursday is pure, unadulterated sham and humbug, trying to pretend to the consumers that he is their friend. It is obvious to even the smallest child who reads that the idea that Canada could turn back the tide, as King Canute tried to do, is silly and fraudulent.

Tonight the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) should be congratulated for bringing the debate back where it should be, namely, to thinking of the needs of the Canadian people. The subject of the debate tonight is the people of eastern Canada. I hope the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands will forgive me, but I would like to add to that the people of British Columbia, because they will be suffering just as

[Mr. Douglas.]

much. Their supply situation is as dangerous as that of the people on the east coast, in particular the islanders.

Tonight we are asked to put our views forward about the procuring of alternative sources of oil for eastern Canada and, I hope, British Columbia. I know that under the tone of this debate I should not recall to the minister the many answers I heard him give in this House and in committee when I warned him and asked him to warn the people of Montreal and eastern Canada of their danger. The minister does not have to look up the dates; he must know them. Some of the dates are January 10, 1973; January 11, 1973; January 23, 1973; and March 7, 1973. I could list 20 different references.

The minister will remember my concern about going to Venezuela last spring, going to Nigeria and, if necessary, even to Libya. I recall in the May 28 debate, which I mentioned the other night, putting forward the fact that the Nigerian government, through its intercity sales organization, was offering anybody 100,000 barrels a day on a long-term contract. No action was taken.

Like the hon. member who introduced this motion, I believe it is too late for recrimination. I will simply leave it by reading one of my questions and the answer. This indicates the type of frustration some of us felt. On January 11, 1973, as recorded at page 168 of *Hansard*, I asked the minister the following question:

... has the minister reached the conclusion that it would be a wise policy to warn the people of Montreal and the marketing district of Montreal that if there is any cut-off in the Portland pipeline to help the Americans out of their emergency the people would have only about 60 days supply?

The minister replied:

We are confident that there will be adequate supplies not only in the Montreal refinery area but elsewhere in Canada for Canadian consumption.

I then asked the following question:

Has the minister seen fit to consult with the government of Quebec in order to arrange a rationing plan in case there is such an emergency?

● (2030)

The minister replied that rationing was one of the possibilities, but he did not see any particular danger. I do not want to pound home this fact. The reason I mention it is that I hope he will not take our advice believing in any sense that we are trying to scuttle him as a minister, or scuttle the government as a government. We simply want to let the people of Canada know that when there is a threat to the comfort or safety of citizens in any part of the country, we in this House pull together as Canadians.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): I gather from reading the press and listening to the electronic media that the minister has made an approach to Venezuela, admittedly four or five months late, and that the Venezuelan government has restated the position that it took five years ago, namely, that it has hydrocarbon products to sell to any country provided that country has established a government agency to act as purchaser. Because of its long experience of the actions of private