

tied in together. It is nonsense for the government to present this bill as an isolated measure; it should be presented to the House as part of the package.

We are quite prepared to give very quick passage to the export tax aspects of the bill for the four-month period. We would be quite prepared to co-operate with the minister if he thinks he might be in some difficulty for the month of February, for example. We want to be co-operative. But we want to see what we are being asked to buy before we adopt something of an ongoing, permanent nature.

We would waive all notices required for the reintroduction of separate bills. We have agreed to a time allocation for the bill before us, and we would agree to a consistent time allocation respecting separate bills. I emphasize that we are certainly prepared to be here three weeks from now to deal with this matter and other matters following the federal-provincial conference, and to deal with them in the context of full information, or at least fuller information. I believe this is a reasonable approach on our part and that we could not do more in present circumstances without abandoning our responsibilities to the House and to the people of the country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: We want to see the government's total package before giving further consideration to these matters. We do not operate on a system of executive rule in this country, though there is a large element of this involved in this tax bill. The government is asking to be delegated the right by parliament to fix from month to month the tax to be imposed. We do not yet have a system of executive rule and we do not yet live in a country that has a unitary government. We in our party consider the federal nature of our country and federal-provincial relationships, as I am sure members of the government do, basically to be a source of strength and we would like to keep it that way.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: So in closing I simply say that it is fantastic that this government seeks this continuing power in the future in regard to the export charge, the amount of which is related to domestic pricing policy, policy that the government has not disclosed and has not even discussed with the House. It has given us nothing at all precise as to what it intends to do to reduce the disparity in price between those parts of Canada that have to rely upon imported crude and those parts using Canadian crude. These are all matters that will be presented to the federal-provincial conference and will be worked out there. I think this House, and in particular the opposition, is entitled to a lot more information, not just generalities, than the Minister of Finance has given us.

● (1620)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) has given the House a very exhaustive resumé of the oil situation as it obtains in the world generally and in

Oil Export Tax

Canada in particular, and has put forward the thesis that the changing oil situation has necessitated a national oil policy. With that contention this party is certainly in agreement, but I disagree with the minister when he says the necessity for a national oil policy has arisen from the fact that the oil producing countries have acted in concert to jack up the price.

It is true that the actions of the OPEC nations, particularly the embargoes and restrictions arising from the Arab-Israeli war, have accelerated the crisis and I think in a way have fortunately demonstrated to us and to other western nations how vulnerable we are in respect of both the price and supply of oil upon which so many western countries are dependent. The fact is that this crisis has been coming upon us for a good while and has arisen from two factors. The first factor is the distribution of oil supplies in the world, and the second is the situation on the North American continent.

With reference to world distribution, some 80 per cent of the world's conventional oil is located in the Middle East. Although we generally think of Canada as a great oil producing country, we have only 2 per cent of the world's conventional supplies and the United States has only about 9 per cent. Therefore, the world has been very dependent upon Middle East oil and is becoming increasingly so as our domestic supplies are diminishing.

With reference to our own supplies of oil, we and the United States have passed our peak of production. In Canada we have a life index of conventional oil of about ten years. If we are fortunate and do not increase our consumption too rapidly, both the United States and Canada will be dependent, before the end of this decade, upon finding other sources of oil either from the oil sands or from shale. Therefore, we have needed for some time a national oil policy and the crisis through which we are passing has been of some use in that it has awakened the government and the country to the need for a national oil policy.

Almost 12 months ago members of this party were pointing out the need for taking a number of steps to meet the situation as it obtained then and as it has accelerated since. We pointed out the need for export controls to prevent our oil being taken out of the country at the prevailing rate of 50 per cent to 60 per cent of our production per day. We pointed out the need for establishing a two-price system so that Canadian consumers would not be required to pay exorbitant prices because of rising world prices, and the need for an export tax to ensure that the additional money received for oil exported did not go to the oil companies which have done nothing to contribute to these increased prices. We pointed out that this additional money should be retained for the benefit of future development. Finally, we pointed out the need for setting up a national petroleum company which would be the sole purchaser of both domestic and imported oil and would have the ability to equalize the price across the country so that people in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces would not be victimized by virtue of the fact that imported oil was reaching an astronomical price.

I submit, in all modesty, that the distinctive position we were taking about a year ago has been fully justified by the developments which have taken place since that time.