context of the obviously special significance the energy sector has for Canadian economic development, that programme is founded on three basic principles -- security of supply and ultimate independence from the world oil market; opportunity for all Canadians to participate in the energy industry, particularly oil and gas, and to share in the benefits of its expansion; and fairness, with a pricing and revenue-sharing regime which recognizes the needs and rights of all Canadians, with respect to the development of all of Canada's regions.

From where I sit, one aspect of the NEP which has been much misunderstood is "Canadianization". The "Canadianization" objective is really very simple: it is to increase the share of the oil and gas industry owned and controlled by Canadians -- to 50% of the industry a decade from now. In the strategy adopted to achieve this utterly legitimate objective, the emphasis is on making room for Canadian oil and gas companies in the industry in Canada, not on forcing out foreign companies. There is no question that we intend to give Canadian companies the opportunity to grow more quickly. What we have not intended or done is to make the operations of large international oil firms unprofitable. For example, the net cost to U.S. firms exploring in Canada will remain lower than in the United States.

But we are dealing with an extraordinary situation. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, non-residents owned nearly 80% and controlled over 90% of Canadian oil and gas assets. They also controlled nearly 100% of the assets employed in refining and marketing operations. Canada did not have a single Canadian multinational oil company, not even a small one. We did not have a vertically integrated domestic company, until Petro-Canada acquired Pacific Petroleum in 1978.

Before the NEP, an unintended by-product of government policies was increased foreign ownership. New windfall profits due to increases in oil and gas prices favoured the firms already in the business with the largest production. Most of these were foreign-owned. These same foreign-owned firms were also the main beneficiaries of the earned depletion allowance, since this deduction from taxable resource income was available only to firms whose principal business was resources and who had existing resource income. The pre-NEP policy framework virtually guaranteed that the big (and the foreign-owned) would get bigger.

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