

Energy Supplies

out spending the taxpayers' money, and probably some of it needed to be spent.

Mr. Andre: I can do that too.

Mr. Forrestall: Yes, the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre) can do it too. So can the private sector and probably a lot more efficiently.

An hon. Member: Give me a blank cheque and I will do anything.

Mr. Forrestall: Yes, give anybody a blank cheque and they will probably do a good job. Our concern is the security of oil today.

An hon. Member: You are way off.

Mr. Forrestall: I am not way off; you are wrong. Nothing which can be said to the people of eastern Canada will convince them that the minister is right. That is where the crisis is. I am not trying to exacerbate things. Why could the minister not get Gerry Regan, Dick Hatfield and Alex Campbell to agree to the formation of a maritime energy corporation three or four years ago? Why did the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) not tell us a story then? We needed it three or four years ago, not because there is a crisis now. When the President of the Privy Council was questioned in the House the other day in the absence of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie), he simply sat there. I am hard-pressed to describe any Cape Bretoner as looking stunned, but to tell the honest to goodness truth, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that he knew what was going on. I think he thought there was something serious happening, but it was obvious that the President of Privy Council had not been advised or briefed. Is that or is that not serious? These are our concerns.

What assurances do we have that on April 1, at the end of this first quarter, there will be the same amount of oil at the Dartmouth refinery and other refineries which are involved as there was one year ago in April, 1978? We heard a lot of rhetoric from the minister last night and from the President of Privy Council this afternoon. Neither has unequivocally stated that there will be the same amount of oil at the Montreal and Dartmouth refineries and all the other refineries of Imperial Oil on April 1, 1979 as there was on April 1, 1978. That is what is concerning people. We hear about all the great things which Petro-Canada can do, will do and is doing, but nobody has told us that we will have that oil for sure.

The storage capacity is running down, and late spring and summer months is the time when they rebuild for the next year. Will the oil be there in April, May and June to fill those tanks?

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Not if Exxon keeps cutting down and diverting the oil from you.

Mr. Forrestall: The one other question that concerns me, Mr. Speaker, is the question of price. Spot oil in western

[Mr. Forrestall.]

European markets yesterday afternoon at four o'clock was bouncing between \$21 and \$24. Can we in Atlantic Canada anticipate that that is what we will have to pay for a barrel of oil? We are paying \$17.50 today, but by how much will it go up by the first day of September, for example? Does the minister have any information in that regard? What will Mexico do if the Middle East drives its prices up? I say once again, in Charlottetown people are paying \$60 for 1,000 kilowatt hours and in Halifax they are paying \$48. Our industrial users are paying \$140,000 for 3.9 million kilowatt hours. How can we develop an industrial base when our costs for energy are so far out of whack with the rest of the country? No matter how much the oil compensatory arrangements make up, the fact of the matter is that 1,000 kilowatts is costing \$60 in P.E.I. What is the government going to do about it? How high will they allow the price to go?

● (1700)

I am a little surprised at the position the President of the Privy Council must have found himself in this afternoon of having to come into this chamber and speak to Atlantic Canada for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Obviously, he believes the minister will not be believed in that part of the country and feels it is incumbent upon himself to speak. I hope he will see fit to answer one or two questions, particularly with regard to the conflict with DREE, the conflict the government finds itself in with respect to this development of an industrial base, and what the anticipated price of crude landed at Dartmouth or Montreal refineries will be for September and the end of this year. I hope he can give an assurance, with some appearance of truth, with respect to the supply that will be available to us for the rest of the year. Those are the questions that concern us.

As the minister said, the bill before us is similar to one that was introduced before. We are prepared to move it quickly to committee so that it can be examined with the fairness it requires and the government can impose some form of monitoring or other control in case of a shortage in order to ensure equitable distribution. I look forward to dealing with the matter in committee. Perhaps someone from the government side will speak later—apart from this sham of Petro-Canada—and tell the people of eastern Canada how much oil there is, how much it is going to cost and whether we are going to get it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Is the hon. member for Algoma (Mr. Foster) seeking the floor?

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Paproski: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. Is the hon. member closing the debate?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, I did not say that. I asked the hon. member if he was seeking the floor to participate in the debate so that there will not be any question as to who has the floor at eight o'clock when the House is reconvened.