

Energy Supplies

enterprise. But I find it is quite ill-advised to ignore the complementing role the government must play in serving the interest of Canadians instead of struggling solely for corporate profits, however legitimate they may be, but which may not necessarily meet the aspirations of Canadians. It was on the basis of that principle that the government got involved in the tar sands and created Syncrude to encourage the development of immeasurable resources which, because of the high cost, had not been developed. Similarly, the government is becoming involved in the north through Panarctic and Petro-Canada. Especially for those coming from eastern Canada it might be well to recognize the great potential of those endeavours in order to remedy an unfair and extremely difficult situation of dependence for that area.

Let us dwell one moment on the fact that 15 trillion cubic feet of natural gas have been discovered in the Arctic on Melville Island at Ray Point and on King Christian Island which can be transported south where there is a pipeline; or let us think of the very interesting proposal of Petro-Canada that Crown corporation—should it only be for that—that these resources should be taken south by methane tankers. I should like to deal with methane tankers, and I have made remarks before in the House concerning them. It would be possible to balance supply and demand. It would be possible not only to bring in resources which are indispensable to eastern Canada which, like Quebec, is 80 per cent dependent on foreign oil, and to the maritimes, which are even more dependent, and thus compensate for the absence of natural resources in the east, but also to develop a new technology, cause industrial developments, create jobs on shipbuilding yards and thus eliminate not only the lack of resources but also the unemployment which is extensive.

We must not disregard these possibilities, and were it not for Petro-Canada, such a project would never come true. There comes a time when we must decide whether we want to argue over constitutional issues or serve the public better. And why make such a fuss about a legislation such as this whose only purpose is to reserve larger amounts of supplies in emergency crises for those areas which need them most? Some may say that it is to please Quebec or the Maritimes, but I say that it is to please all those Canadians who have at heart the sharing of resources. Selfishness exists on a collective basis just as it exists on an individual basis, and some Canadians who possess resources feel that they should be the only ones to benefit from them. On the contrary, because there is already a sharing of wealth among the provinces, we say that the state has the duty to ensure our self-sufficiency as well as a better distribution of our resources among the provinces and individuals.

That is not saying we ought to question the very existence of private enterprise. We are aware of the fact that throughout the world, these corporations have resources, assets and contacts which are useful to us as far as our supplies are concerned, but we cannot rely only on their initiative because we

[Mr. Gendron.]

have proof that this can run counter to our interests. That is why we must have Petro-Canada and the Energy Supplies Allocation Board in case of emergency. I will not deny that I am flabbergasted that these principles are questioned again, and I cannot see why the House cannot expedite passage of such a sound piece of legislation.

● (1620)

[English]

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I want to surprise you by letting you know at the outset that, unlike many of the speakers on the government side, I am going to try to restrict myself to the amendment before us. I know Your Honour will be pleased about that attitude because in the course of this discussion on the amendment moved by my colleague, the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence), subjects of a wide ranging nature have been dealt with. Granted, they are of some importance. I listened with great interest to the comments of the hon. member for Rivière-du-Loup-Témiscouata (Mr. Gendron) with respect to his concept of self-sufficiency and about how Petro-Canada should operate within our country, but what we are really dealing with is an aspect of a particular bill with respect to allocation of petroleum resources in Canada in a time of apprehended or actual crisis.

I want to bring the attention of the House back to precisely what the terms of this bill mean to our parliamentary system and what they mean as far as we as representatives of the people of Canada are concerned in carrying out, as we should—and the vast majority of us do—the responsibility we have to articulate on behalf of our constituents their concerns with respect to government policies.

If parliament is to be relevant, it must be given the opportunity to deal with important issues. I wonder whether the government is serious about this bill. I refer to clause 11(4). I want to remind Your Honour, if Your Honour needs reminding, of what this clause does. Clause 11(1) reads:

When the Governor in Council is of the opinion that a national emergency exists by reason of actual or anticipated shortages of petroleum or disturbances in the petroleum markets that affect or will affect the national security and welfare and the economic stability of Canada, and that it is necessary in the national interest to conserve the supplies of petroleum products within Canada, the Governor in Council may, by order, so declare and by that order authorize the establishment of a program for the mandatory allocation of petroleum products within Canada in accordance with this Act.

That actually means “in the opinion of the government”. If at any time there is some deficiency in terms of petroleum supply, the government can make a decision and pass an order in council. The moment it passes an order in council the provisions of this allocation bill come into force. Let there be no question about that. This is not an innocent bill dealing with some small aspect of our society. It is a bill dealing with a very important part of our society, that is, energy and petroleum products. There are very far-reaching powers in this bill.

The word “opinion” stands out in my mind, and we as parliamentarians should be very leery about approving legisla-