

Supply

time again we have seen that the multinational oil companies are not philanthropists. That is not a condemnation so long as you realize that they are multinational oil companies. They buy and sell oil and gas around the world. They do not become nationalists or philanthropists. They do not become an arm of the Canadian Government or society. We have to realize that, and for the Government to say what it did was naive and insulting to the people of western Canada.

In March the Government announced the exploration and development incentive program. It is estimated to be worth about \$350 million. I think it will help exploration and development in the energy sector, and that is very important. While I do not think it is as good as others that could have been brought in, I support it because the Government is finally doing something for the energy sector. It is doing something for the small and medium-sized companies in that sector. That is very important.

There is a myth that when things were going well in Alberta a lot of people jumped on the bandwagon and invested money but they should have known better. That is a very unfair rap on the energy sector in Alberta. To say that when things were going better small and medium-sized oil companies should have known it was not going to last is wrong.

The major chartered banks invested millions of dollars in the energy sector. How can you say that about the small and medium-sized players and not about the banks? It is unfair to say these companies were all johnny-come-latelys. They are not. They have been in business since the 1930s and 1940s.

I talked to the president of one company which had been in his family since 1936. He told me he was going to have to lay off employees and it bothered him very much. It kept him awake at night. These people were not just employees. They were friends, he had known them and their families for years. That he would have to lay off some of them caused this man no end of concern.

I talked to a lot of people whose jobs were uncertain. They said they wanted the Government to tell them what it is going to do. If it does not want to help them, at least give them the courtesy of telling them that. If they are going to be laid off they want it done now so at least they have a chance to get a job. Given the uncertainty of the Government, later would be too late and the market will be filled with people looking for work. That is exactly what happened. Mind you, a lot of people have left the province, but a lot are still there, without jobs but with a great deal of uncertainty facing them in the future.

The price of oil has gone up, and I hope it goes up more because it is important to get a reasonable price so people can plan. If it does not go up, we have to do something. The Government did not do anything when it went down. Surely the goodness it will do something if it goes up over U.S. \$20 a barrel. Surely it will plan and put some kind of safety net in place for the people of western Canada. Surely its inhibitions about regulation are gone now that it has brought forward the

exploration and development incentive program. Surely the Government realizes this is regulation.

The Liberal Party brought forward a cash flow stabilization program which we thought and still think was in the best interests of the energy sector. It did not go anywhere, largely because it was the Liberal Party that recommended it. That is the sort of silliness that goes on across the way.

Members opposite talked about improved drilling. I am going to read some figures that were given to me by the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada. In 1985 there were 12,564 wells drilled in Canada. That dropped to 6,400 in 1986. This year it is projected at 5,400, and that with the price of \$20 a barrel. That may increase if the price increases, but there is no abundance of drilling activity in Alberta.

What about the Senate? To my knowledge no Members across the way have said they support a triple-E Senate. Westerners, Albertans in particular, are completely disillusioned because of that. Not only with the Conservative Party but with federal politicians in general. Being a federal Member of Parliament, that causes me a great deal of concern. I am pleased Albertans put forward this idea of a triple-E Senate. Had they not done so in the hope they will get a fair deal in Confederation in future, then they would be talking about separation and splinter Parties and other things which are not in the general interest of keeping this country together. To lose that valuable and beautiful province would be a tragedy. It is important that the Government treat Alberta fairly. Don't go making excuses or pass the buck. Treat them fairly. Recognize their problems and deal with them. That is the only thing they are going to understand. Fair treatment is the only thing you can expect anyone to understand.

Since 1972, Albertans have voted Tory almost exclusively. They had the right to feel they were going to get fair treatment, but they were ignored. They got platitudes, which only insults their intelligence. Is there any wonder they get angry?

This is a good motion because it puts forward some very important facts, and I hope the Government will listen instead of turning away and making believe these problems do not exist.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pappas): Questions or comment? Debate.

Mr. Paul Gagnon (Calgary North): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—The Sydneys (Mr. MacLellan). He said the National Energy Program did not cause the disaster we are faced with in the oil industry in Alberta today. Let me draw you an analogy. A fellow was walking across the road and was run over by an 18-wheeler. He ends up in the hospital with a broken leg, broken pelvis, wearing a body cast, with a tube of liquid running into his arm. He starts to make a come-back. He gets healthier, but then he catches pneumonia and dies. By the Hon. Member's reasoning his death has nothing to do with the accident, it is the pneumonia that killed him.