

Canada Oil and Gas Act

longer in the favour of the minister or his bureaucrats would have some other forum in which to express its legitimate concerns, in which it would be listened to, and if the concerns are correct, they could be redressed.

We will have a lot to say. Of course we served notice on the government. I personally walked out of the committee, as did some of my friends in the NDP, on the day when we were about half way through consideration of the bill and the government laid its 115 amendments on the table. The government had accepted all those amendments which needed to be accepted by the time we were half way through the bill. It became painfully obvious that the government was in no way inclined to accept any opposition amendments. I asked some of my colleagues on the other side whether it was the intention of government members on the committee to give any consideration to any opposition amendments and, if not, whether we could be informed so that we would not have to sit any longer through the rather childish and juvenile exercise of simply saying yes or no to whatever the government told us. Without any precedents of which I am aware, the parliamentary secretary admitted that he had orders from the minister not to accept any amendments from the opposition or even consider them, but simply to deal with the amendments the government had proposed.

Of course, this points out how seriously the parliamentary and committee processes are in jeopardy. That is why I walked out of the committee and why my NDP colleagues walked out with me. The government is stuck with this bill in the House. The amendments will be debated as we go along, but if the government has any illusion about getting the bill through the House before the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) decides to sit down with the provincial premiers to discuss the Constitution, then it should think again.

● (1600)

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Madam Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to participate in the debate on Bill C-48. Certainly I must agree with my colleague the hon. member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly), who indicated on the last day we debated this motion that this is the most important economic legislation to be presented to this House in this session.

Before I develop the concerns the New Democratic Party has about this bill, I should like to respond to the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River (Mr. Oberle) who expressed alarm at the call for retaliatory action against the national energy policy voiced by some in the United States. I feel very strongly that the concerns expressed by the congressmen and state representatives in the United States about our national energy policy are misplaced. The reason that they are now questioning a number of the economic "flows" between Canada and the United States is because of the effects of their own monetary policies and the Reaganomics program.

Following closely on the heels of "Thatcheromics", "Reaganomics" have attempted to jack up interest rates to levels which will curtail production in the United States as was

the case in Britain. Unfortunately, it will appear that our own Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) is following the same disastrous course. We in this party wonder how long it will take before they all realize the error of their ways.

It has become clear that things in Great Britain will get worse before they get better and it appears that the same thing will take place in the United States. We hope that the budget which is to come down on or about November 10 will reflect a new thinking, will depict a willingness on the part of this government to admit error and that it will introduce policies to stimulate our economy instead of driving it to its knees.

In the past few days I had the opportunity to participate as an observer in the Eighth International Symposium on Small Business which was hosted by the federal government. It was a first-class symposium, and I must toss an accolade to the Minister of State for Small Businesses (Mr. Lapointe) for the positive way in which it was organized. It resulted in some of the most progressive dialogue on small business that I have heard in a long time.

I listened with great interest to the Japanese and Korean delegations outline in considerable detail the relationships between big business and small and medium business in their countries. When we compare their achievements with our track record, it is obvious that we cannot begin to match what they are doing. Korea and Japan recognize that small business plays a very critical role in the economy.

When we look at the record of many northern and western European countries we see that for decades their policies have shown an understanding and appreciation of the role of small business in the regional, local and national economies. That is not the case in Canada. We now have, however, an opportunity to change this through Bill C-48. We have an opportunity to introduce a policy that would present a clear signal to the small business community of Canada that we appreciate the role it plays; that we are prepared to put legislation in place to encourage the development of the small business sector, to provide the initiative that it seeks from senior levels of government and to give a clear signal that it should forge ahead with the megaprojects that are associated with Bill C-48.

We are told that in the next decade energy investment is likely to exceed \$210 billion. The Royal Bank of Canada reports that within the next 20 years in Canada expenditures of over \$1 trillion will occur in the energy sector. It is interesting to note that the amount to be spent on equipment will total \$67 billion, three times the amount spent over the last 20 years. This projection is for the next decade.

There is an excellent opportunity now for the federal government to bring in legislation through simple amendments to Bill C-48 that would assist small business in many ways. I must admit to feeling a great deal of disappointment as I read through the various clauses of Bill C-48 seeking a statement that would indicate a willingness on the part of the federal government to source goods and services from Canadian suppliers. After searching with a fine toothed comb, the best statement I could find was to the effect that an exploration agreement will be required which will require the holder, prior