

Energy

because of our vast distances and our distance from world markets. However, we are one of the few countries of the world with the advantage of reasonable amounts of energy, and if prices are not allowed to escalate this energy will give our industries a competitive advantage in world markets. What are we doing with this energy? There is no indication that the government intends to change its policy. As a matter of fact, there are some things in the report which indicate that the government intends to continue its policy—

An hon. Member: What policy?

Mr. Douglas:—of exporting over 50 per cent of our gas and oil. Thus, we face the prospect that by 1985 or sooner we will be turning to other sources of energy which will be much more expensive, and any competitive advantage we have had will disappear.

● (2020)

I suggest that this analysis already sets the stage for phase two and for the goals and guidelines which the government proposes to bring down. Implicit in this analysis upon which we were briefed this afternoon is, first of all, the assumption that the Mackenzie valley pipeline will be proceeded with.

An hon. Member: Possibly two.

Mr. Douglas: Possibly two, but certainly a gas pipeline down the Mackenzie. The Arctic Studies Company Limited made it clear that in the initial stages there will be no Canadian gas for Canadians and that after an interval only 5 per cent of the throughput will be for Canada; the rest will be exported. The second assumption is that we will continue to export oil at the same rate as we import it. Our imports will certainly increase by at least 4 per cent per year, so our exports will increase by 4 per cent per year. The third assumption is that domestic prices for oil and gas will be allowed to follow the international prices. There is no reason why the Canadian people should have to pay more for their gas and oil merely because other countries are prepared to allow their prices to rise.

It seems that the government has already set the stage for business as usual, follow the old course, continue to export oil and gas, continue to allow our prices to go up, and continue to sell cheap, accessible fossil fuels knowing full well that in a matter of a decade or a decade and a half we will be paying very high prices for these commodities.

It is a sad day for this country when we get the kind of document we have today in return for a demand by the Canadian people for a national energy policy. This is not a national energy policy: this is a decision by the government to put off having to make very difficult decisions. The government will have to make those decisions. Unfortunately, if it procrastinates and dawdles long enough, the decisions will inevitably be the wrong decisions in terms of the welfare of the Canadian people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, the minister has just tabled a report, or rather the conclusions of a study on the energy possibilities of our country.

We are, of course, very pleased to be able to read the work of the technocrats, and I am well aware that since this government has been in power it has given us quite a lot of reading to do through the reports of the many commissions it has appointed. It would seem that as soon as the government comes up against a slightly thorny problem, it hurries into creating a commission to look into it, into asking technocrats to perform this or that job, to such an extent that since this government has been in power, I believe the number of technocrats has tripled. Whenever we have to discuss a problem, be that of energy or any other, we are stuck with technocrats.

Today, I witnessed a perfect example of the present strangle-hold technocracy has on us. Next week, I shall have to face technocrats, and I cannot get out of it; provincial and federal technocrats will have to meet because they are the ones who will decide what the government must do.

I admit that I began reading those reports and I will take the time to read the one that was just tabled, like all the others ones. I listened with interest to the minister, who besides is always well-intentioned, with his group of technocrats. To prepare himself for the opening of the next session, he promised that next month he would meet all provincial governments to discuss the possibility of establishing at last, in agreement with the provinces, an energy policy for Canada.

I believe it is going to take another year, first to devise an energy policy, if the technocrats are willing to show the department how to give Canada such a policy that will enable its economy to operate at the other countries' level.

And I realize that with all those studies we are still 10 or 15 years behind other countries. We do nothing but copy other countries, especially the United States and we are always behind them. And I can imagine, although I did not yet read the reports, that another belated policy is going to prevail and I always hope that some day the minister—I am not questioning his capacity, although I question that of certain other ministers—at the opening of the next session will at least give us a policy that will be to the advantage of Canada, of consumers, of producers and exporters.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order. The House having completed motions will now proceed to the consideration of orders of the day, namely government order No. 49.