

to shelter low and middle income families from the impact of higher oil prices.

There was to have been a self-sufficiency tax which would have netted \$6 billion over five years, every nickel of which was to have been reinvested in energy-related projects. It would have partially financed a Canadian Energy Bank to help Canadians invest in Canadian resource development, particularly in the frontier regions. It would have helped finance pipeline construction, develop hydro, coal and more experimental sources, fund home insulation, furnace retrofits, fuel substitution, urban transit and other conservation measures. It is worth putting those elements of the energy policy on the record.

The Government of Alberta was to have loaned \$2 billion to the energy bank. They agreed to invest \$3 billion in equity and debt in the next two oil sands plants. They would have helped fund five new energy projects in other provinces. Alberta was to have sold natural gas at 85 per cent of the price of oil and 65 per cent of new gas going to eastern Canada, and at the same gate price in Quebec City as in Toronto.

When he spoke in this chamber last session, Senator Everett referred to the longer term problem of the redistribution of natural resource revenues. Our colleague, Senator Macquarrie, the other day made reference to the former Prime Minister's speech at Spruce Grove during the last election campaign. That speech was prepared not for an election campaign but for a meeting of first ministers which was to have been held in this city on December 13 had parliamentary events not intervened. It is clear that the next item on the agenda—and in our judgment it was a logical progression, once the matter of pricing had been settled—was to obtain an agreement on the entire question of redistribution and of the fiscal imbalance in this country.

The energy policy of the Progressive Conservative government and the agreement reached with Alberta have been on the record for some time. We shall see whether the Trudeau government can do better. We know that they can impose a price. We know that there are constitutional provisions, which today most people would regard as rather Draconian, that they can avail themselves of. The question is whether they can obtain an agreement with the producing provinces and come up with an overall policy and program that is as beneficial to Canada as ours would have been. I hope they can. But it does not look very promising. Not only is there no agreement with the producing provinces but—I say this on the authority of a reply given by the Minister of State for Economic Development some days ago—but there is not even a federal proposal on the table. Not only is there no agreement with the producing provinces, but there is no agreement among federal ministers.

Since 1973 we have lurched from one improvisation to the next from year to year. Are we going to have more of this, and with what result in terms of our dependence on foreign sources? I am told that we now import about 25 per cent of our oil and that at the rate we are going it will be about 40 per

[Senator Murray.]

cent by 1985, or about 200 million barrels annually by that time.

Serious people who read the speech of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources will find it hard to believe that a responsible minister, purporting to state the government's energy policy, delivered a speech so devoid of hard policy. The truth is that there is a vacuum in energy policy at the federal level, and that until the vacuum is filled this country will be at a standstill in terms of the kind of planning we need to solve a national problem and achieve national objectives. The country will pay a heavy price—and I am not speaking about the price of a barrel of oil or a gallon of gasoline. I am talking about the price in economic, social and even political terms if a national policy is not put into place soon.

These are matters on which Her Majesty's loyal opposition, convinced of the soundness of our policies, will be holding the government rigorously to account. We would, of course, prefer to have been in government implementing our own policies, but we are now in opposition. We will be as diligent and as conscientious in carrying out that responsibility as we would have been in government, believing as we do that in our parliamentary system the one role is as vital as the other and that at this time in our history the Conservative Party has a role to play that no other party can play in defending our institutions and preserving our Confederation.

[*Translation*]

There are several comments I would like to make on this issue because it is very important to defend our institutions. Since coming to power in 1968, the Trudeau government has more often than not been characterized by its attitude of intolerance rather than by its spirit of liberalism and democracy. The unreasonable attack launched by Mr. Ouellet against the information media and especially against Radio-Canada is but a recent example. In October 1969, Prime Minister Trudeau himself lost his temper because a Radio-Canada reporter had asked an American businessman, David Rockefeller, what would be the attitude of foreign investors towards an independent Quebec.

Prime Minister Trudeau used this interview as an excuse to launch a virulent attack against Radio-Canada during which he even threatened to "lock up the joint". He even suggested that the federal government could produce programs on its own. After the Quebec elections of 1976, we witnessed a concerted attack by federal ministers against Radio-Canada. Mr. Ouellet said he had a list of the Péquistes in the ranks of the French network. And for this insult to political liberties of Canadian citizens, Mr. Ouellet was publicly congratulated in the house by the Prime Minister of Canada.

An inquiry by the CRTC proved that Mr. Ouellet had purely and simply embarked on a witch hunt. At about the same time, the minister was interviewed on CBC. During the interview he mentioned the mandate of the corporation by saying, and I quote: