

The national energy policy has had an extremely beneficial impact in his region. His was probably one of the regions most victimized by soaring gas and heating oil prices, remote as it is from major urban centres.

Imagine, the Hon. Member for Abitibi is pleased as Punch and tells us in his remarks: I come from a region where untapped natural resources are plentiful and I am very glad to see that the national energy policy is to be shelved, because this will be good for exploration.

Madam Speaker, today the Hon. Member for Abitibi urges the Government to scrap the whole thing—more than that, he is glad the Government does not intervene—yet the other day he made a speech in which he stated that the same Government had to step in to maintain flow through shares. That is Government interference on the market place!

The Hon. Member for Abitibi cannot have it both ways. If the Government does not intervene at all, then the Hon. member is in favour of abolishing flow through shares, because this is one way the Government can give money, as was done through the national energy policy, taking money with one hand and giving it with the other. He has to be logical.

Madam Speaker, with respect to the Canadian policy concerning home insulation and the switch to electricity or natural gas, these are two measures which were implemented.

I read the speech of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and he was pleased about that. He said it had been a good thing because it made it possible to save a non-renewable energy, oil and gas, by using instead a renewable energy, electrical power.

Well, the Hon. Member must at least try to be logical in his train of thought.

● (1700)

[English]

**Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge—Foothills):** Madam Speaker, I am absolutely delighted to speak on Bill C-17 because it finally marks the death of the PGRT and the National Energy Program. Finally we in the West are feeling a sense of justice, albeit very late. We are in deep trouble now, but a piece of legislation that was most unjust is being taken off our backs.

It was not only the PGRT that affected us so badly. I suspect that even most western Canadian Members forget that there were some five or six taxes imposed on the industry including the natural gas and gas liquids tax, the Canadian-ownership charge, the petroleum compensation charge and the incremental oil revenue tax. A whole series of taxes were imposed on an industry which was located in one region of Canada, a region from which there were no elected Members in the governing Party. That was most unjust.

At this time I feel it is appropriate for me as a Member from Alberta who lived through that period of time to express my deep personal appreciation for Progressive Conservative Members of Parliament from Ontario who, in those three years, voted directly against the position of the Ontario

### *Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax Act*

Conservative Party, at least three times of which I am aware. They did this because they knew that the National Energy Program was not right for Canada. They knew it was inherently unfair and they voted against it even though the Liberal Government of the day described the program as being in the best interests of the consumers of central Canada. It was a deliberate, open attack on one region of Canada for the benefit of another region. It took three years for Progressive Conservative Members of Parliament from Ontario to get the people of Ontario as well as the people of Quebec and Atlantic Canada to finally realize that the program was unfair, unjust and not in their best interests either. I express without any hesitation my thanks to those Hon. Members.

What was the National Energy Program? History will show it to be the meanest attack on a region that has ever occurred in the history of Canada. It was a tax imposed on only one source of energy. There would have been no kicking and shouting from the West if the tax had been imposed on hydro-electricity and on energy across the entire country. It is fair and legitimate for a central Government to raise money but it should not raise money in an unfair way. Of course, we knew that there would never be a tax imposed on hydro-electric power because it is produced in Ontario and Quebec, provinces represented by then governing Liberal Members. That is why the National Energy Program was so wrong.

With great respect to my friend, the Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor), I believe he was thinking of another figure when he said that \$5 billion was drained out of western Canada. That \$5 billion was drained out in a different way. These taxes drained over \$60 billion out of western Canada. That figure is just incredible. The reason for this was to block British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and to a lesser extent, Manitoba from receiving the full difference between the world price of oil and the cost of producing relatively cheap western sedimentary crude. All of the difference was taxed away to Ottawa. It was a deliberate plan, as Marc Lalonde acknowledged, to prevent those provinces from becoming too rich as compared to the federal treasury.

The Alberta Heritage Trust Fund should contain at least \$30 billion to \$40 billion rather than the \$10 billion to \$14 billion it now contains. If the province and the owners of the resources had that money, Alberta would not be in trouble today. It would not have to turn to the rest of the country for help.

The PGRT hurt the oil companies. I can remember hearing Mr. Lalonde say in the House that we had to get the multinational corporations. That kind of statement always triggers an ideological response from members of the NDP who say: "Right-o, anything anti-American is fine, let's go after them". But it was not those six or seven multinational corporations that were hurt, it was the over 600 small Canadian oil and gas producers and the service industry composed of the people who do seismic work and the servicing of wells. Those are the ones who went broke by the tens of thousands in western Canada.