

Energy Monitoring Act

intelligently. The entire question of efficiency, which is important and necessary in the relationship of different energy activities, has not been described.

The minister will know that the special committee that reported to the House as well as to him made many recommendations on how to deal with the meaning of conservation in a comprehensive way. Apart from the negative implications created in the minds of people when we talk about conservation, the fact is that conservation is an efficiency which could benefit not only the lifestyle of Canadians but Canada as a whole. These facts are continually overlooked when individual departments do separate studies in isolated and unco-ordinated ways.

I would strongly urge the minister to undertake to study some of these basic questions and deal with them in a comprehensive way so that we may look forward to a future which would not be left with a crisis such as we have now as we attempt to deal with our energy needs in Canada.

In conclusion, the basic question we have concerns the direction in which we will head in managing energy affairs in Canada. The course the government is obviously following with this measure, which was initially included in the omnibus Bill C-94, is a course which means an increasing and continuous government involvement in all levels of the energy sphere. While this may be reasonable and debatable in some areas, in other areas, particularly where business activity is involved, the government has proven, through its daily demonstration of its management of its own affairs and that of the country, that it cannot and should not have the confidence of Canadians and should withdraw from many of these areas to allow those individuals who are knowledgeable and capable of making their own choice to become involved in the sort of activities which will generate economic wealth for all of Canada.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on an act respecting energy monitoring which will also amend the Energy Supplies Emergency Act, 1979 and the Oil Substitution and Conservation Act. I wish to put that on the record so that the minister will be sure I am speaking to the right bill.

One thing that I think I have learned—some members may suggest it is the only thing—during the last two and a half years I have been in the House is that the Liberal Party will never do anything by halves which can be done by quarters. This act is an outstanding example. I would not give it such an exalted title. I would call it the "Powder Puff Act". When the Liberals have a problem, they want to study it. If it is a bigger problem, they will monitor it. As long as one can continue to study and monitor it, one just kind of hopes that the problem will go away. It is called the Mackenzie King theory of government, and it is ably practised by the party across the aisle.

● (1550)

This agency is like the chicken monitoring a den of foxes. It is really kind of useless. It reminds me that in many speeches

in this House, in Saskatchewan and elsewhere, Tommy Douglas used the line about everything being equal. It is capitalism, every man for himself. He said it is similar to what the elephant said when he was dancing among the chickens. This bill is like having one lone chicken dancing among the elephants. I want to tell the minister why. I hear the minister yelling across from me. I want the minister to look—

Mr. Lewis: Tell us about oil.

Mr. Waddell: If the hon. members to my right would just listen for a moment, I might show them something they may be very interested in.

Mr. Lewis: Doubtful.

Mr. Waddell: I have in my hand an excerpt from a Liberal campaign ad. I know how much the Liberals like these ads. In *The Globe and Mail* of February 2, the ad stated:

To ensure fair costing, there will be a petroleum pricing and auditing agency.

Does the minister remember that? It continued:

A new permanent petroleum pricing and auditing agency would be established to investigate and report on industry costs, profits and operation.

Mr. Lalonde: Right.

Mr. Waddell: It continued:

This will also see to it that money earned in Canada will be reinvested in Canada to find new sources of energy.

It seems to me that in this bill the Liberals are downgrading the concept of a strong, independent monitoring agency. In fact, the ad of the Liberal Party gave the impression during the campaign that this would be a pricing agency to ensure fair costing. It is far from that. It merely gives a statistical survey of the industry. That is what it does. It is a toothless tiger. It is a powder puff. That is why I called it the powder puff bill.

Therefore, what I am saying to the minister is that during the 1980 election campaign he and his party gave the impression that they would do something about industry rip-offs. Had not the Bertrand commission at least alleged that the industry had ripped off something like \$12 billion in price-fixing over a period? It is an example of the government pretending it would do something with a tough monitoring agency. It really did not do anything.

The gist of my opposition and the crux of our party's objection to this legislation is that it is really a toothless monitoring agency. If we had the chance, which we may hopefully have in the future, we would set up a commission on oil prices and profits. We would call it "COPP", because it would act like a good cop and it would have the power to investigate prices and profits. It would have the power to roll back unjustified prices.

Nowhere in this bill is there power given to the Petroleum Monitoring Agency to do what I suspect people would really like it to do, that is, to examine oil prices and, if there were rip-offs, to roll them back. My friend the hon. member for Comox-Powell River (Mr. Skelly) will speak a little later for our party on that aspect of the Bertrand commission and the