

Economic Conditions

If I am interpreting this morning's news correctly, what is happening today is that representatives of the three western provinces will be meeting to formulate a joint stand in terms of the energy policies of this country. This scares me in several ways. It means that Mr. Blakeney of Saskatchewan is no longer the "kept man" of this federal Liberal government. He is looking out for the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan, as he should.

If you are going to criticize, and I have done so, you should have something constructive to offer. We have two alternatives. We can go the way this Liberal government is now going, which means in March a cutback of 60,000 barrels of Alberta oil and two subsequent cutbacks as well as the year rolls on. There are two subsequent cutbacks as the year rolls on. I do not believe this country can stand that. It should not have to stand it. However, that could take place.

● (0910)

Also, we have an energy minister who has shown a complete inability to negotiate and does not have the faintest idea of what is taking place in western Canada. That will mean continued difficulties, a major slowdown in drilling, exploration and development in the maritimes and the west. That is one policy.

There is another policy which this government in one way or another could follow and which would solve most of the economic problems of Canada. We require in this country \$1.2 trillion for the development of tar sands, for exploration on Sable Island, Newfoundland, the north and Alberta. Where will that money come from? It cannot come from the Canadian people, although that seems to be the proposal of the government. That trillion dollars is investment capital and it is available if we will treat the companies and investors fairly, and that means they should have their world price.

Let that flood of money into this country to develop a couple of tar sands plants. Bring back the drilling rigs. Tell the companies we will treat them fairly, that we will make them a deal they cannot refuse. A drilling rig working in Colorado does absolutely nothing for Canada. A drilling rig working in Canada can make a difference to our energy self-sufficiency. Therefore, we must bring them back.

This has to be the best policy for Canada to adopt. This year, \$5.5 billion will be paid out for foreign oil. Over the past nine years, we have had a total deficit of \$65 billion. If we attract the capital to obtain oil self-sufficiency, we are \$5.5 billion better off this year. Over the next decade, we will be better off by more than \$65 billion.

My friends on the extreme left want social programs. Think what we could do for the poor, the underprivileged, the low-income people of this country, if we did not have a drain of \$65 billion, \$5 billion a year, in terms of an oil subsidy. Those are the choices we are looking at.

The policies of this government will lead to the separation of western Canada. That should be stated flatly and straightforwardly. I do not think anyone in the Liberal benches is

listening, nor do they have the faintest idea of how serious the situation is out there.

All it is going to take is one more insult to the west. That insult could easily come this spring. If this government attempts to use "peace, order and good government" or if it attempts to use the declaratory power, I suggest secession will be a possibility. If they go as far as the War Measures Act with regard to some of the things that seem to be on their agenda in terms of oil and gas policy in detriment to the west, secession will not be a mere possibility, the people will be demanding it. For heaven's sake, consider your options. Realize there is something more at stake than interest rates and economics. The very fate of our country rests in the balance of what this Liberal government does in the next six months. God help us all if the government does not revise its policies.

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Dionne (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, one year ago at this time I launched vigorously into my second electoral campaign and, thanks to the performance of a Progressive Conservative government, I was returned to this House with a majority never achieved before by a Liberal candidate in my riding.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to say that the opposition has enabled us to gain a renewed mandate for several years and that this debate has not really been initiated to find solutions to our current problems but indeed to earn political capital at a very bad time of the year. When we relate interest rates to the moral problems which certain regions of our country have experienced, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that most hon. members who took the floor during the night have failed to come up with truly serious arguments to help the have-nots.

Mr. Speaker, I think that under the circumstances the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) has acted very courageously and in the best interest of Canadians. Let us go back to last year, Mr. Speaker, and recall the policies of the Progressive Conservative administration which today passes itself off as the defender of the poorest people in this country. Let us recall the policies advocated to help the rich. How were we going to help the rich? By levying an 18-cent excise tax on a gallon of gas to the detriment of the poor. It should be said, Mr. Speaker, they stand in the House to uphold the interest of hypocrisy pure and simple.

It is unthinkable, Mr. Speaker, to hear them say our country is going through a crisis, and to witness debates such as we have heard throughout the night and monopolize the time of all hon. members, of an entire nation, in an attempt to warn against an emergency situation. We are still in a privileged situation if we compare ourselves with all other industrialized nations. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we should mention our energy policy, knowing full well as we do that our energy policy is perhaps one of the most outstanding ever introduced in the House. Mr. Speaker, the time has come for us to put the accent on a nationalist policy in this country. We know that