

Transport Budget Forecast

for Toronto-Lakeshore has difficulty in that respect, I sympathize with him. However, I suggest that opposition members should make use of their research staff to zero in on their particular fields of concern without trying to become experts on the whole book, because that is impossible even for members of the Treasury Board. By making proper use of research facilities and staff we can find out what we want and then put questions on the order paper that make more sense. This would put the government in a position where it would have no other course than to answer those questions because it would look ridiculous if it allowed them to remain on the order paper.

As I have pointed out, Mr. Speaker, this government has been the least secretive of any. It was on this government's initiative that funds were made available to opposition parties so that their members could do better research, become better informed and be in a better position to question ministers.

I agree with the removal of estimates from committee of the whole and referring them to the appropriate standing committees so that members of those committees can become experts in particular fields. I defy any member of this House to say that he can become an expert in every field for which we have responsibility in parliament; but by having a special standing committee dealing with particular estimates, by using the blue book and the research staff and by doing a little digging on his own, a member of parliament need not feel frustrated. Also, the information he needs can be obtained from the minister during committee hearings. I am proud of this government for making money available to opposition parties so they can do a better job in carrying out their responsibilities. However, Mr. Speaker, I must say it was much more fun in the previous parliament when I was sitting opposite the NDP benches and could hear their interjections.

I listened very carefully to the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore. I thought he made a rather weak analogy when comparing city councils to this chamber. City councils work to develop a particular project and budget. I point out that all the information in the blue book is available to cabinet ministers, but I do not think each of them reads all the material that has to do with another minister's responsibilities. However, the principle suggested by the hon. member has some merit.

The hon. member for London East (Mr. Turner) has pointed out that it would be very costly to circulate all this information. It seems to me that if the opposition parties each selected one of their member to serve on a shadow cabinet—as I understand is done unofficially at the present time—possibly all this information could be made available to that particular expert, so that if he were questioning the Minister of Transport, for example, the member also would have all the information available to the minister. This is an approach that could be considered. In this situation I suggest that not only would selective material be made available, but in fact all the information that was available to the minister. But, of course, we would run into the difficulty of finding enough members of the NDP to form a shadow cabinet, as will be the case particularly after the next election.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We are not shadows; we are real.

[Mr. Cullen.]

Mr. Cullen: I would have much more to say, Mr. Speaker, but time has run out.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hour appointed for consideration of private members' business having expired, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ENERGY SUPPLIES EMERGENCY ACT

MEASURE TO PROVIDE FOR ALLOCATION BOARD,
MANDATORY ALLOCATION OF SUPPLIES AND RATIONING
OF CONTROLLED PRODUCTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale) that Bill C-236, to provide a means to conserve the supplies of petroleum products within Canada during periods of national emergency caused by shortages or market disturbances affecting the national security and welfare and the economic stability of Canada and to amend the National Energy Board Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

Mr. Bill Knight (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity just before private members' hour of beginning my remarks related to energy policy in Canada. In the short time I had, I suggested I would deal with the present situation in the province of Saskatchewan, a riding of which I have the honour to represent, and with the situation related to the oil industry in Saskatchewan. Also I propose to deal with the proposals of the government of Saskatchewan, its implications and suggestions for policies on a national level or, indeed, for any other province of Canada. I was pointing out at five o'clock that the Saskatchewan oil reserves are some 800 million barrels and that our rate of discovery of new resources had levelled off in the last seven years. However, our production rate continues at 80 million barrels per year. This means a lifespan for our oil fields of only ten years. If we discover more reserves, then obviously the lifespan of our oilfields will be extended.

Our oilfields were developed by private interests, and those private interests were well rewarded. By 1964, the oil industry collectively in the province of Saskatchewan had found and had sold enough oil to recover the costs of exploration and production. Since 1964, \$800 million in profits has been realized in the province of Saskatchewan from oil only worth at that time between \$2 and \$2.50 per barrel. I emphasize the figure of \$800 million in profits, Mr. Speaker.