

*Oil and Petroleum*

the price of western oil, presumably to be determined by federal-provincial negotiation. Surely the government should be telling this committee why those negotiations have so broken down that we are now confronted with Bill C-32, which in its present form is obviously completely unacceptable to the producing provinces and, I suggest, to the consuming provinces, certainly to the province of Ontario.

Speaking of the province of Ontario, I presume that the 55 Liberal members in the government caucus who come from that province must be asking themselves why it is that, despite the fact that their membership in the caucus has risen from 36 in the last parliament to 55 in this parliament, their representation in the cabinet has gone down. Surely those Ontario members must go home at night scratching their heads and wondering why in the twenty-ninth parliament there were 11 cabinet ministers from Ontario, the next highest province being Quebec with nine, whereas in the thirtieth parliament the same Prime Minister has chosen only ten cabinet ministers from Ontario and 11 from Quebec.

**Mr. Turner (London East):** You would never make it anyway.

**Mr. Stevens:** Well, it is your caucus. I have touched briefly on the allied question of conversation. I hope Ontario members of the government caucus are asking themselves why the government has not worked out more effective measures to help conserve energy in this country. In the United States, for example, speed limits have been reduced. Not only has this reduction in the speed limit saved a considerable amount of energy, but it has had the collateral advantage of saving many human lives through fewer fatalities on the roads. I checked the situation today and found that, based on 100 million vehicle miles, the number of fatalities in the United States has dropped 20 per cent to 25 per cent since speed reductions were made mandatory in that union. Yet this government has repeatedly stated that it does not intend to take any such measures but hopes, through a \$1 million advertising budget, that it can talk people into doing something about conservation.

Conservation is conservatism. We believe in conservation, and we certainly believe that if there is any serious energy shortage we should not only be looking for new reserves in this country but conserving the energy that is available to us. It is only recently that Canada has developed a national set of statistics which relate to our inventory of energy supplies. Until very recently the Canadian government had to depend upon statistics provided for it by the oil companies, statistics which hardly provided a basis for a sound national policy but only benefited individual firms or industries.

We still find it difficult to discover the facts about our inventory of energy resources. Planners both in corporations and in government have had extreme difficulty in producing valid projections. In spite of our lack of knowledge about our inventory of energy resources, there is no doubt that long before the so-called energy crisis in 1973 experts in the oil industry, government and universities were telling us that our energy resources were being depleted at perhaps too fast a rate. They told us we should

[Mr. Stevens.]

seek alternative sources of energy and in some way end our extravagant use of depleting resources; yet this government has chosen to do virtually nothing.

● (1640)

Even today, when the world's economic system may collapse because of the tremendous balance of payments problems caused by the western world's inability to pay for high-cost energy, at a time when the poor nations of the world are starving and have little prospect of being able to improve their position because of the high cost of energy, and in spite of the example set by our neighbours to the south—which I have touched upon—we in Canada are doing nothing to conserve our essential reserves and we are doing very little to develop new sources of power and find other ways to provide energy for our industrial and social life.

At a time when all the developed nations of the world are placing increased importance on the over-all concept of rail transportation and the development of new forms of technology in urban and intercity transportation, we in Canada are still back in the 1950s. We have virtually no research taking place on problems connected with urban transportation systems. We have no leadership from this government to help provincial governments set up urban transportation programs which would end our dependence on the automobile, that extravagant user of gasoline, and get our citizens in the large cities to their places of work efficiently. At a time when most other countries are expanding and improving their railways, we are ripping up our tracks and cutting down the number of rail services, forcing Canadians to use automobiles and buses.

Perhaps it is unfair to blame the situation solely on the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Certainly his colleague, the Minister of Transport, has to take some credit: he has set a new record, perhaps, in incompetence and inability to master that portfolio. One hears that a new cabinet shuffle is coming up.

**The Deputy Chairman:** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his allotted time has expired.

**Some hon. Members:** Carry on.

**The Deputy Chairman:** Is it the wish of the Committee that the hon. member be allowed to continue?

**An hon. Member:** He is not saying anything, so let him go ahead.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Stevens:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will not go beyond my time except to say I should like an opportunity to speak again on this important bill. Many of my colleagues intend to speak on the bill, and we believe that many members from Ontario sitting on the government side should also get to their feet and speak on behalf of the consumers of Ontario, informing them that our energy problems are due substantially to the incompetence of the present government.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** Mr. Chairman, I must say that not the least useful aspect of the speech of the hon. member for Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe was getting something