

Government Orders

Petro-Canada was meant to perform the function of being an honest participant in that market, to the extent that there was one, that would give Canadians the break at least of some honest competition. I am not saying that the other companies are performing dishonestly. The record speaks for itself. They have done from time to time in the past. I am saying that having Petro-Canada government owned out there in the so-called marketplace would be one ingredient assuring Canadians that there was some element of opportunity for willing sellers to look for the best deal.

I also wanted to make the point that the government needs an energy policy. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources has just come into the House and I am very glad to see him. He uses the rhetoric from time to time of there being a marketplace, when the government's own actions, half-baked and tentative as they are, shows that it recognizes itself that there is not a marketplace. This country needs an energy policy.

We are a uniquely situated country. Most countries in the world do not have a choice about what their energy policy is going to be. They do not have the margin to do very much picking and choosing or structuring about what their energy policy is going to be. Either they are exporters of one particular kind of energy, or they are importers. They are stuck in an international situation which pretty well dictates what their energy policy is going to be.

Canada is unique in having the opportunity to have a real put together, considered, multi-faceted energy policy. We are so well endowed with so many options as you move from coast to coast. There are tidal opportunities. There are hard metal and uranium opportunities. There are conventional oil sources. There are tar sands. There are offshore opportunities. Every variety of possibility that the mind can concede is a possible option for Canada.

The government says the marketplace is going to tell us all about that, as if it did not know itself by what it did in Hibernia, for example, that the marketplace is not going to deliver. It is not going to be the decision maker

for us about where our future is going to lie. The marketplace is a very short-term, reactive phenomenon. Canada can have an energy policy which, if we want to support it, can be a strong factor in national unity for the country. We can have an energy policy that looks to every region of our country and to its opportunities and offers as a nation to see them supported.

Some energy opportunities take 10 years to bring to market and a lot of new technology and new thinking about conservation, distribution and refining. It is not something that the marketplace can adequately respond to. It is something that we ought to put together in the same way that we put Canada together in 1867 with the concept of a railway, something that the marketplace would not have given us, something that needed to be a kind of national vision.

I put it to the government that energy for Canada is not just a marketable product. It is a strategic resource in which we have so many options and ways to go and such a possible long horizon of planning and opportunity, that to put forward a false premise or theory of common sense, which it says dictates that Petro-Canada must be sold now, is an insult and a betrayal of our future as a country.

It does not surprise me that the government is not thinking about the future of the country or that it is not trying to build or to enlarge. So many of the things that the government has done have backfired, but even the ones that have been successful have resulted in the diminishing of what it means to be a Canadian and to know what Canada is all about. It has to learn. I hope there will be a government in office one day that will know that to hold the country together, one has to keep building, not privatizing, deregulating, Americanizing, or turning over to the provinces. That is not a future for our country.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): It being six o'clock, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6 p.m.