

Energy Supplies

If Petro-Canada can do what the minister has said he would like it to and become the importer of oil from Venezuela on a straight government to government trading basis, why could Petro-Canada not do the same thing vis-à-vis the other oil exporting companies in Mexico, Iraq, Iran, Nigeria and so on? There is no reason at all why this should not be the case. Why does the Liberal party always fail to carry through? It makes a cosmetic gesture but never does anything which is meaningful and effective.

I hope the minister will tell us why he feels Petro-Canada should not be authorized to deal with state oil companies other than those of Venezuela. There is nothing mandatory about the amendment in the name of my hon. friend. It simply gives the government power to take action should the occasion arise and should the occasion warrant it. The government would then have the power to make Petro-Canada the sole importer.

I do not intend to take up much time dealing with the comments which have been made by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence) or the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre). The hon. member for Calgary Centre said, if I remember correctly, that this legislation gave dictatorial power to a minister and to a board which had no experience of dealing with these matters. Would the official opposition prefer to continue to put these powers in the hands of the multinational oil companies which have deceived us and exploited the people of this country down through the years?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Come, now! You are not speaking in the Alberta election. You are speaking this week, not last week.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Is that the position of the Ontario government and of the official opposition?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Your record in Saskatchewan on oil is a great example. That is just old party dialectics.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) should not allow himself to generate more indignation than he can handle. He is going to burst one of these days.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I am just confused by the hon. member's statement.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I know the hon. member is confused and I am trying to straighten him out.

How have these multinational oil companies been described? They have been described very adequately during the last few days. Let me give just one description which hon. members who are interested in the subject may find at page 4256 of *Hansard* for last Friday. The hon. member for Northumberland-Durham is reported as saying:

I certainly do not want to defend in any manner the present or past history of the multinational oil companies of the world in the world market. On many

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

occasions they certainly have not acted in Canada's best interest. They may not even be acting in Canada's best interest right now. They are obviously acting in their own best interests. That is what they are there for.

● (1610)

He went on to say:

It is a shame, and one of the tragedies of this government and this country that we have to rely on multinationals at any time for any amount of crude oil.

In my wildest moments I have never made a more excoriating attack on the multinational corporations than those two quotations. The hon. member for Northumberland-Durham has put the problem in very clear and concise terms. As he describes it, these multinational corporations are not acting in Canada's best interests, have not in the past nor are they now. He points out that it is a shame and a tragedy that we have to rely on them for any amount of crude oil.

If he believes that, then how can he in the same breath oppose this legislation and this amendment and suggest that we should turn over to the multinational corporations, as we have done for decades, the whole question of the distribution of oil? He makes the point in one place that we do not really need to worry about that because the International Energy Agency is now setting up such an organization.

Of course, that is complete nonsense. The International Energy Agency has an agreement which has brought together some 19 countries, of which Canada is a member, and they will from time to time have the authority to agree among themselves as to what amount of reduction they will impose with reference to the importation of oil. In other words, they will try to agree among themselves to reduce the demand so that it will come somewhere close to equating with the supply. But they have no machinery for distributing oil and they will not decide how much Iranian oil will go to Canada, how much to the United States or how much to Japan. Unless we set up our own machinery under this act, unless we give to Petro-Canada the power to be the importing agent with respect to the purchase of oil for Canadian oil companies, that decision will be made by the seven "Big Sisters", by the big oil majors. They will decide, as the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham has already stated, what is in their own interest, what is to their best advantage and what will best please the countries where they are incorporated, and that is not Canada.

I shall listen with interest to what the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) has to say. I do not want him to tell us that he is against the multinational oil companies controlling the distribution of oil but he proposes to leave Petro-Canada without any power other than what the government has already given it to negotiate for sales with Mexico. The minister has so far given a good deal of lip service to strengthening the powers and the capacity of Petro-Canada, and for that I give him credit. I think that Petro-Canada needed more clout, and I think the minister has given it that. It has become a much more effective instrument during the time that he has been minister, and for that I commend him.

I have also noticed, of course, that my friends in the Progressive Conservative party have become more vehement every day about destroying Petro-Canada, and that is going to