

Petro-Canada

should like to put the same question in reverse. Should the world price be \$10 a barrel, how much lower can the federal government set the price in Canada while guaranteeing development and exploration at the rate necessary to maintain security of supply for this nation in the future? These are the questions we have to put to the government. There is nothing which answers them in the bill now before us, only a proposal to set up a monstrosity, a sink down which taxpayers' dollars will flow. Tax money will go down the sink because there is plenty of evidence that in this particular field, one which involves high risk, there is no substitute for know-how, expertise and management ability.

I cannot believe that a corporation along the lines of Air Canada or the CBC—I am not criticizing those two institutions at the moment, but merely making an analogy—could succeed in such a highly competitive field as the oil industry, or accomplish anything there except increase the taxes paid by the average Canadian. And while this new Crown corporation is pouring more taxpayers' money down the sink, the price of gasoline will be going up at the pumps.

Mr. Speaker, it can be said of many of the bills we question as an opposition that they contain at least some good mixed with the bad. Having been in this House since 1958, I have no hesitation in saying that in my opinion there is nothing good in the measure presently before us. It will likely cost the taxpayers money out of all proportion to the services to be provided.

Mr. Dionne: Rubbish!

Mr. Woolliams: The hon. member says, "Rubbish!" He always makes remarks of that kind; it is the only contribution he ever makes. He will find out that I am right when this corporation is established. If he can name one Crown corporation which is really as efficient as the private sector, particularly in this high-risk capital sector, I wish he would stand in his place and do so, because I would be prepared to listen to him.

Mr. Stan Darling (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Mr. Speaker, here we are again, wasting the valuable time of this House debating a bill which should not even have been introduced. While the country is being held to ransom by one dissident labour group after another, we are debating whether we should pass legislation allowing the government to go into competition with the oil companies in our country. We could use our time better by debating how we should get people back to work, or how we should tackle the serious problem of runaway inflation.

However, the bill has been introduced and it is a foregone conclusion that it will receive approval, considering the fact that the government has a majority. It is no good hoping that members on the other side of the House will vote as their consciences dictate when the bill comes to a final vote. They will vote as they always do; they will vote as the boss dictates. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, what we say here will probably have little influence on the final result. In any case, I fully intend to make my feelings known on the bill before us and to expose the real intent of the government with respect to this so-called national petroleum company.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

Members on this side of the House, those in the official opposition in particular, have been pressing the government for a number of years to develop some kind of national energy policy and to let us know what it is, if and when they have one. We have waited in vain for this to be done, as we have waited in vain for results on other important matters. *Hansard* is full of speeches in which we in the official opposition have used every opportunity to bring this question before the House and to the notice of the government.

● (1530)

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) should know by now that we would support the government right down the line if they were to table something in the way of a national energy policy. But, Mr. Speaker, Bill C-8 is a long way from being a national energy policy or even a step in the direction of such a policy. It is simply another ploy, another attempt at power grabbing and another attempt at building another wing onto the already top-heavy bureaucracy.

It has been suggested that Bill C-8 is just another attempt on the part of the government to create a snug haven for defeated Liberal candidates and for loyal party faithful. There is good reason for such suggestions to take root in view of some of the other agencies that have been created by this government during my time in this House. Some pretty good jobs have been created in the past few years for the Liberal Party faithful, and they are good paying jobs. When you consider the power that some of these people have in the bargain, it is understandable that those of us on this side of the House look with suspicion on bills which seek to create still more of these unnecessary new agencies.

I am a little puzzled and concerned over some of the statements made by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources on March 12 when he tried to sell Bill C-8 to us. Anyone in the House who heard his speech would have wondered if he had the wrong speech, or the wrong audience. The minister was hardly into his speech when he said that this bill "is a most important element in the government's long-term planning to secure adequate supplies of energy to meet our national needs". Now, there is a nice little bit of double-talk, Mr. Speaker. What the minister said is what I might say if I were trying to say that I had worked out a national energy policy. So I might be forgiven if I interpret this to mean that the minister has in fact worked out a national energy policy. Well, just what is the policy? When is the minister going to let us in on his new energy policy?

I think I can speak for my colleagues when I say that I have been waiting a long time to hear the government's plan in the way of an energy policy; and if they have one now I want to see it, I want to hear about it and I want it brought into the House so that we can debate it. All I have seen so far is this bill, a bill to allow the government to establish a petroleum company to go into competition with private industry, to compete with free enterprise.

I cannot accept the minister's claim that this bill is, in effect, the cornerstone of some fanciful national energy policy. What I think, and what I am sure will be borne out next month, is that this bill will allow the government to