

Energy

private members' business has now expired. I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

● (2002)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

PETROLEUM ADMINISTRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AUTHORIZE IMPOSITION OF LEVY ON DOMESTIC PETROLEUM AND IMPORTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Gillespie that Bill C-19, to amend the Petroleum Administration Act and the Energy Supplies Emergency Act, be read the third time and do pass.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): At five o'clock the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) had the floor.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, when the debate was suspended at five o'clock this afternoon, I was summarizing the remarks I had occasion to make when a committee of the House visited the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and also Alaska, on the American side, up to Prudhoe Bay. I was filled with wonder at the sight of those vast territories being explored by the oil companies, national or multinational; they act like little sisters, over there, exactly as if they were the Dionne quintuplets. We all remember the Dionne quintuplets, all in the same cradle. Over there, the companies act the same way. I have nothing against that! As long as we do research that is beneficial to all Canadians. But having done the research, they should not agree to put off the development of the large oil resources existing in those regions and worry Canadians by saying: "Well, we may run out of this source of energy in five, or maybe ten years." I am against creating all this concern among Canadians and the fact that they accept to pay higher prices because in my opinion there is something desperately wrong if there is enough oil at \$1 a gallon but no longer enough at 70 cents. I quite agree that companies involved in research should reap benefits so they can pay dividends to their shareholders, because I do prefer financially sound companies to those which are on the verge of bankruptcy. But there should be a happy medium between these two extremes.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

Then again I had the opportunity to visit the preliminary operations related to the Alberta tar sands. I understand this type of operation is more costly than well drilling, but when you sink a well you expect to get some oil out of it. I understand all this. Last week, during the debate on the budget, some hon. members are reported to have mentioned the government proposals on tax reductions, especially as regards the sale tax, and it has been said Alberta does not have much to say in that regard because it does not have any tax on retail sales. It makes me very happy. If in the last 35 or 40 years the government of Alberta has been wise enough to use its natural resources to finance its operations and contribute to the expenses of the province, whether under Social Credit government headed by Aberhart, or Manning or under the present premier, I am pleased that they use their natural resources for the benefit of taxpayers to finance the public sector of the province.

I wish all provinces endowed with plenty of natural resources would do the same, be it forestry or hydroelectric wealth like in my province, for instance. Those resources ought to be used for the benefit of the people to relieve them from their tax burden. I entirely agree with that. But, Mr. Speaker, this is not the issue. The object of Bill C-19 is to maintain our national price at the world price level. And we must take the necessary means for that. We should not fall into the trap. We see some far east countries relying entirely on this and succeeding in blackmailing many nations throughout the world just because they have tremendous reserves. Good for them, but if you want to maintain peace and avoid what I can foresee, an armed conflict, we must negotiate with them. We must conclude agreements with those countries but we should not produce every day millions of barrels of oil and send them to the other side of the border with the idea that we must share our resources with our neighbours. I have nothing against it but we should not share with our neighbours at the expense of our own children, at the expense of Canadians. In that respect I invite our government to be extremely careful as Canadians are more aware of the situation than they think. They are watching the production of Canadian oil more closely than we think and it is a matter that concerns them a lot.

Although I am not an expert, I do not accept the fact that we frighten Canadians by telling them in four, five or six years we shall have an oil shortage. If those predictions are right they have been made by people who are much smarter than us we are and who have been able to explore the subsoil, and if they are so smart we should hire them immediately to try to implement a more intensive research program on solar energy. This is something I trust because nobody can harness solar energy at the expense of others. It is a matter of finding ways to use this energy, of being able to store it for the months when the intensity of the sun is not so high. We are not in Africa but in Canada. If those scholars were able to discover the possibility of exploring underground for oil resources, it would be all to