

Oil and Gas Act

which level of government has authority to issue regulations governing Canada's coastal waters.

This should bring a measure of certainty to the entire oil industry and to those who manufacture oil drilling barges. We manufacture such barges in Canada; I saw a picture of one which had been built in Halifax. I recall discussing with the representative of a shipbuilding firm the problems of shipbuilding, and part of our discussions touched on this particular issue. I ask, why should not Canada specialize in building vessels we will use a great deal? I think the proposed amendment will bring a great deal of certainty to our total business economy, including that area engaged in the business of constructing oil drilling barges.

There is another area which concerns me, Mr. Speaker. Last year parliament passed Bill S-29, but that bill has not yet been put into force. The government house leader said we must hurry and pass a number of government bills. Those bills were passed, but they are not being utilized. The bill to which I referred is one of those which has not been put into effect. The house leader was telling us not to delay, yet Bill S-29 has not been put into force; nor has the government set up the oil and gas committee mentioned in Bill S-29. Why, Mr. Speaker? Why is the government hurrying the House to pass legislation and then dragging its feet in the administration of that legislation? It has not even established the regulations called for in the bill. Why has it not done so, Mr. Speaker? The companies affected are not quite certain what is happening. Why does the government not bring this legislation into force? The bill was passed towards the end of June. It was sound and contained good law. The opposition was urged not to drag its feet; Parliament passed the bill but the government is not utilizing it. Why? Rather than agree with the position of the hon. member for Brandon-Souris, who has urged some delay, I should like to kick the government and tell it to get the lead out.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Thomson: The government pushed the legislation through, but has not acted on it. I suggest, in addition, that the credibility of the government house leader has been called into question because the government has not hurried to implement the legislation.

Mr. Baldwin: What credibility?

Mr. Mahoney: You are going too far.

Mr. Thomson: The government is red hot about passing legislation but slow in administering it once it has been passed.

Mr. Dinsdale: There is a little confusion on the government side.

Mr. Thomson: The parliamentary secretary suggested that the need for such legislation as this is increasing. I agree with that statement. This bill is a good measure in that it will institute controls over those companies wishing to drill for oil off Canada's coast or on Canada's continental shelf. We ought to pass it now and, if necessary, amend it later. In the meantime, let us pass a measure which will show that we are concerned about the pollution problem and that the continental shelf off Canada's shore is our land.

• (12:50 p.m.)

Mr. P. M. Mahoney (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, I am very anxious that this amendment be passed and made law at the earliest possible date. I think that anxiety is shared by the industry that will primarily be affected by it. I think the industry shares the mystification of the hon. member for Battleford-Kindersley (Mr. Thomson) as to whether the government shares that anxiety.

The act which we are now amending received royal assent last June 27, yet the oil and gas committee authorized by section 4 of the act, and whose existence is an essential element of the system of control and conservation envisaged by the act, has yet to be appointed. I have no idea what other steps, if any, have been taken to implement the act.

While the present amendment is very important in that it will bring uniformity to the administration of an important field of the law regulating the petroleum industry, the fact remains that the present act, unamended, embraces the entire area of federal responsibility where production and conservation are a reality rather than an expectation. One might hope that the committee would be appointed and put to work immediately, even though there may be some delay in bringing under its jurisdiction that part of our federal petroleum and natural gas resources administered by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

The government may have some information that has yet to be published but, as far as I am aware, all discoveries to date on federal lands lie within the jurisdiction of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern