

*Oil and Gas Production and Conservation*

might be overcome if they would refer to page 824 of these proceedings where it is indicated the committee moved an amendment to clause 6 which reads:

—provided further that no member who owns any shares of any company engaged in any phase of the oil or gas industry in Canada shall vote when a question affecting such a company is before the Committee.

The members of the committee examined this provision pretty carefully. I cannot help but think that this amendment may meet some of the objections coming from the members of the New Democratic party. It is unfortunate that that particular party was not represented at the committee meeting because their representative might have been in the position of being able to explain to the members of his party the purpose of this particular amendment. As I recall, it was agreed by the members of the Conservative and the Liberal parties who were at that meeting that this seemed to be the best way to overcome the natural concern about conflict of interest. I just point this out in the hope that it may alleviate some of the fears which some members on the other side of the house seem to have.

**Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, after listening to the comments from the other side of the house one cannot help but realize the kind of basic assumption being made by the Liberal party.

**An hon. Member:** What is basic about shares?

**Mr. Saltzman:** Well, we heard the hon. member for Essex (Mr. Whelan) express concern about putting a tariff on bananas because it interfered with the sale of tomatoes.

**Mr. Whelan:** No, that is to help the under-privileged countries which supply the cheap bananas, and you know it.

**Mr. Saltzman:** Mr. Speaker, I hope the Chair will take cognizance of the irrelevancies emanating from that side of the house when we are attempting to discuss a serious matter. It seems to me the assumption is being made on that side that only the businessmen of this country can be trusted to make decisions which affect the development of the nation.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Oh, no.

**Mr. Saltzman:** Then why insist—everybody does not understand the reasoning of the [Mr. Orange.]

minister and the government in this regard—that people from the private sector be members of this committee and not even give us the assurance that those who are members are not involved in a conflict of interests.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Read subclause (2) as amended.

**Mr. Saltzman:** Even with the amendment there could be a conflict of interest. We on this side of the house are not satisfied that the possibility has been eliminated. We think the only reason many of the people in the private sector will be members of the Committee will be to ensure that their interests are not jeopardized. In the past this country has created Crown corporations of various kinds when the country was being developed. When we established the Bank of Canada it was thought that people involved in banking would have the expertise required of those who would be involved in the Bank of Canada. It turned out that this was disastrous. Ultimately, it was necessary to have the Bank of Canada completely under the direction of the representatives of the people of this country rather than those who might have a conflict of interest. I suggest this very well might be the case in respect of this kind of instrument.

I sometimes wonder whether the government, in bringing in a bill of this kind, is not itself cognizant of the difficulty we are pointing out in respect of a conflict of interest but feels, because of their great commitment to the business interests of Canada, that it is necessary to take this preliminary step, even though ultimately the committee will have to be under public direction in order to preserve the national interest. So, I am very sceptical about legislation of this kind. I wonder, for instance, whether the minister has taken a look at what has been done in Italy. In that country a large part of the oil industry is under national direction, and even though oil is not indigenous to that country the price of the product to the consumer is quite low. In this great nation of ours, where we have all the natural resources, the Canadian consumer pays more for gasoline than does almost any other consumer in the world. So, it does not make much sense to input people on the committee because they have expertise. They have the expertise to suit their own interests, but will they have the expertise to suit the national interest?

I also wonder why some attention has not been paid to having some representation on this committee from the indigenous people of