

Canada Oil and Gas Act

the minister will consider giving them a licence to operate on federal lands.

There are some companies of a multinational nature operating in our country who are solely-owned subsidiaries of other companies based in the United States. They appeared before the committee. We questioned them about their intention to rebuild their corporate structure to accommodate the government's new nationalization policy. Some of them told us that they would have serious difficulty meeting deadlines or with their shareholders in light of some of the minister's comments before the committee. In fact one member of the New Democratic Party was known as "the hon. member for Norway", because he always talked about Norway. But Norway never confiscated any private assets. It did certain things which the minister and "the hon. member for Norway" liked. Incidentally "the hon. member for Norway" comes from British Columbia. He said that Norway insisted upon 85 per cent government ownership in its oil industry. The minister was asked when he would realize this and attune his policies to such a trend. The minister answered, "This is just the beginning; give us time".

If I were a member of the oil industry, this would indicate to me that he may confiscate 50 per cent of my assets; but if I continue developing new wells, it may be more later on. This is not the kind of climate in which I would make any investment if I were a foreign or domestic oil company because I would fear, particularly now it has been clearly established that Canadian ownership means government ownership, that as soon as the multinational companies were chased out of the country I would probably be the next target of the government.

● (1550)

This bill is not just another piece of legislation. It is a doctrinaire expression of the government's definition of economic nationalism. I do not understand why our friends in the NDP are so upset with the government. As a matter of fact, Bill C-48 and the general energy policy of the government are precisely what the NDP requested—nationalize the oil sector. If they do not have the courage to do what socialists and communists like to do, namely, to assume government ownership of the tools of production, the next best thing is for the government to obtain ownership and control of the fuel which drives the machines and the tools of production.

The NDP should be quite happy about what the government is doing. One member of that party rose during question period today and said that the bad Americans were considering reciprocal action. Imagine what it would do to the Bronfmans, the great multinational whisky dynasty, if they were told that they would require a 50 per cent partnership in their U.S. operations. That might not be the end of it. The Americans might decide not to be compassionate and co-operative with us in the future when it comes to marketing our lumber and wood chips. The hon. member rightly expressed some concern because this has been suggested to the President by some lumber manufacturers in the western states. What would

happen if the Americans decided to impose a 10 per cent white wood tax on spruce lumber? This is what the Japanese are doing in order to protect their sawmill industry. The effect in Canada would be that our industry, which produces \$24 billion in export earnings every year, would be bankrupt, and the one million Canadians who are directly or indirectly associated with the lumber industry would probably end up eating bark off the trees. This is what would happen if the Americans chose the wood converting industries as a target for reciprocal action for what Canada is doing in the energy sector. Hon. members opposite may laugh, but when one sleeps next to an elephant one does not throw sand in its eyes every morning because, if it rolls over some night, one might find it very uncomfortable.

This is the reality of the matter. Also we are selling the Americans 60 per cent of our total lumber and wood fibre production, and 75 per cent of our industrial manufacturing capacity is traded with other countries. We cannot forever dump on them. We must realize that we live in an economic community, that we must trade with other countries in order to keep working, to pay wages and to make demands on the industrial sector as the unions normally do respecting higher wages and better working conditions. This is a legitimate pursuit, but it must be backed up by an industrial base. Our industrial base rests upon our ability and our aggressive approach to international trade.

I do not know the number of submissions which were made before the committee, but every intervenor, whether it was a union, a corporation, an oil company, an independent petroleum association or anyone who felt affected in any way by this legislation, complained about Clause 10 of the bill, which gives incredible discretionary powers to the minister. If it is our intention to ensure that the legitimate Canadian interests are protected with respect to the environment and their aspirations in the area of developing new sources of energy, the minister must have some power and some discretion.

All we are saying in our amendment is that there should be some checks and balances and some accountability. We are not afraid of the minister. We take him on every once in a while and embarrass him in the House. We are more afraid of his bureaucrats and officials because they make decisions such as the recent one to phase out 25 per cent of the operations of VIA Rail. I suppose the officials and the bureaucrats received some direction. They were told to slice \$100 million from their budget. The minister said, "I do not care how you do it; just tell me how and give me some arguments which will protect my hide when I am questioned in the House of Commons." They gave him some arguments which have not helped to save his hide. These are the types of things which can happen if a minister has excessive discretionary power.

We would like some accountability. We would like a built-in appeal procedure. Most intervenors would have liked to control the powers of the minister in other ways, but the minimum requirement would be that the government accepts some form of appeal procedure. For example, a company which is no