

### *Energy*

make up for the many years during which his government has not seen fit to present to this House and the country a relevant policy on one of our most important industries.

One central theme emerges from this report. The government has once again backed away from formulating a coherent national energy policy. The title of the report is misleading. The title of the information program is misleading. This is not a policy; it is not a policy program; it is not a policy recommendation. It is a non-policy. Despite repeated comments by the minister not only in this parliament but also last year that a policy statement would be forthcoming, what he has tabled here tonight is a non-policy. But perhaps the minister is not solely to blame for this. If recent reports are correct, then no doubt what appears before us tonight is in fact a watered-down version of the original study the minister placed before the cabinet for approval. The people of Canada may never know what happened in cabinet. What we do know is that the people of this country are still waiting for a national energy policy.

I hope Canadians will participate in the debate which will be triggered by the documents tabled tonight. If my early conclusions based on a review of this report are correct, then the people of Canada should beware: the government is either unable or unwilling to come to grips with the major energy issues confronting Canada today. Time will not stand still while the government hesitates and vacillates. Time marches on, and these problems remain with us. This report, while ambitious in scope, containing as it does projections to the year 2050, has merely restated the major energy issues facing this country; it has not provided answers for them. Some of these issues are so pressing that answers are urgently needed.

Is the interval between tonight and the time when a national energy policy finally appears to be characterized by more ad hoc government decisions? How many more sudden export controls will the government impose until it has made up its mind to bring forth a comprehensive national policy statement? Is the government satisfied that eastern Canada may not again be threatened with shortage of supply? What is the government's policy with respect to the pricing of energy supplies both domestically and abroad? What about the Mackenzie valley pipeline project? What will the government do if an upheaval in the Middle East jeopardizes energy imports to our eastern provinces? Do two of our strongest provinces have to engage in a useless constitutional dispute before our Supreme Court because the federal government has failed to show leadership?

These are some of the energy problems the country faces today, these are some of the energy problems that demand answers now, and these are the problems that the government has chosen to ignore. We must have answers, and the country must have leadership.

In closing my remarks let me say that if the government is not ready to enunciate a national energy policy, parliament will find a policy for them. We in the Progressive Conservative Party therefore call on the minister to convene an all-party, special committee of the House which is assigned the task of formulating specific energy policy proposals without delay.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Why are you so embarrassed, Donald?

[Mr. Balfour.]

**Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands):** Mr. Speaker, the people of Canada who are concerned about the energy problems facing this country now and which have faced it for some years will be disappointed, as I know my colleagues are disappointed, with the minister's statement and the document he has filed tonight.

For four years we were told that the government was formulating a national energy policy. As far back as January 10, on January 16 and on several occasions since then I asked the minister when he was going to bring down a statement on national energy policy; not a study but a statement on national energy policy. The minister constantly gave receding dates. During the cabinet meeting on or about April 10 it was decided that the phase one analysis needed auditing prior to publication and that it should be sent back to the minister in order to portray a more neutral stand on major issues. The cabinet decided, since about April 10, to postpone phase two, the goals and objectives that would set forth the definite policy, and the minister stopped talking about a national energy statement and began talking about studies.

There is no harm in studies. We all agree that you must gather all the data you can before you make decisions. But you cannot go on forever collecting data. The problems that we face in this country will not wait for endless studies and endless analyses. These problems are upon us now. The government has been telling us for a long time that it is willing to come up with solutions.

The document which the minister tabled raises a host of pertinent questions. It does not suggest any solutions. The cabinet, apparently, on April 10 decided it would not handle the hot potato of setting forth solutions until next year or later, so we are to wait for one year. In the meantime, its failure to make decisions, or its ad hoc decisions, could lock this country into a situation in which the kinds of solutions that ought to be made will no longer be possible. As the queen said in "Alice in Wonderland", this is the kind of world in which you have to run as fast as you can to stay where you are. We cannot wait while the minister does endless studies before dealing with some of these problems, and the document the minister has tabled does not give us any answers about the energy problems which face this country.

The minister and his officials have given us a very competent compendium of data, which I think we already have heard before the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works. Mr. Speaker, one does not need to have further studies to realize from the analysis which the minister has tabled that two simple and irrefutable facts are apparent. First, this country is running short of cheap and readily accessible fossil fuels. We have between 12 and 14 years of cheap oil available, and 25 years of cheap natural gas. Second, when we develop oil from the tar sands and secure natural gas from the Arctic, the cost will double or triple. Surely the government does not have to wait and gather studies to realize the economic insanity of allowing readily accessible, cheap fossil fuels to go at low prices; and it must face the fact that in 10 or 15 years we will pay two or three times the present price for these commodities.

Canada suffers from many disadvantages as a great industrial power. We pay more in transportation costs