

Petro-Canada Act

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Talk about Saskatchewan now!

Mr. Blaikie: The people made a judgment on the ideological position of the Conservatives rather than on their practical ones. It is quite all right to have ideological positions, but I just wish the Progressive Conservative Party would have the guts to carry on the debate with regard to Petro-Canada at that level instead of trying to mix the issues. It does not like to do that because it knows it is out of touch with the Canadian people on this issue, not to mention a whole lot of others. The Liberals, in spite of Tory rhetoric, have really not departed from an energy policy which favours private interests over the interests of the public. In fact, it could be argued that PetroCan is the best friend the multinationals ever had. It is a ready source of capital through joint venture in high-risk exploration while the private companies have seen their traditional monopoly over easily extracted resource reserves left untouched. What is happening? The people of Canada will pay for all the risk exploration, getting only a small amount of equity in return. The private oil companies, the great risk takers and entrepreneurs that the Progressive Conservatives are always fantasizing about, will have the cushion of government money at the beginning of exploration and the cushion of the profits which will be theirs alone after.

• (1640)

We argue that PetroCan should be the number one oil company in Canada, and that the Liberal national energy policy is really a political charade by which Canadians are given to understand that the Liberal Party is actually doing something to recover control over a crucial area of our economic life, our energy resources, a control shamefully and cynically given away over the years by the same Liberal Party.

The only credibility which the Liberals have in this so-called move to the left comes from the Conservative Party. The Conservatives, in their usual politically stupid way, are giving the Liberals far more credit than they deserve. They rant and rave about socialism, public ownership and all this kind of thing, which is exactly what the Liberals want them to do. They want the Canadian people to believe that is what they are actually doing. Their best allies are the myopic speeches given time after time by Progressive Conservative members in this House.

The real truth of the matter is that the Liberals are no different than they ever were. We witnessed just in the last 24 hours that they are still willing to mindlessly and shortsightedly sell off our energy reserves on the basis of unproved reserves. This is a mistake they made once before. My leader pointed this out two days in a row in question period. It is a mistake they are preparing to make again.

They talk about surpluses. When it comes to a non-renewable energy resource, in the long run there is no such thing as a surplus. Only an idiot would get up and talk about a surplus after all the literature regarding the limits to growth which has appeared in the last 10 to 15 years. It is evident that it is ridiculous to talk about surpluses. In the long run, there is no

surplus of a finite resource. Our resources have to be managed accordingly.

I said the Liberals were no different than they ever were. They were sucked in by the Americans two years ago, just like the Tories, because the Tories believe what the Liberals believe when it comes to megaprojects. They were sucked into believing that the pre-build of the southern portion of the Alaska gas pipeline would be a pre-build. That is to say that the construction of the whole pipeline would follow, that there would be a post-build. It now appears that was the height of gullibility on the part of the Liberal government.

The Liberals are no different than they ever were in that PetroCan represents no change from the energy economics and developmental model followed so long by the multinationals in Canada. Instead of irresponsible drilling in the Beaufort Sea and across the Arctic by multinationals alone, we now have to bear the pain of watching our own corporation doing that kind of irresponsible energy development. This is what I meant earlier when I said that all the Liberals have done is to insert PetroCan into an otherwise unchanged energy policy. For those of us in the New Democratic Party, this is the tragedy of PetroCan. We do not see PetroCan as simply another big oil company, only publicly owned, imitating private oil companies in everything it does. We want PetroCan to take on the job of beginning to manage our energy resources in a more responsible, democratic and farsighted way, a way which sees the political task in this area as one of stewardship rather than quick exploitation.

We want PetroCan to embody a new ideal of what it means to be involved in energy development, developing our resources in an efficient and life-affirming ways. Resource development should be managed in such a way as to encourage conservation rather than taking advantage of ever-increasing commercial promotion of energy-consuming devices. Resource development should have as its priority the development of resources that are renewable, that can be extracted and used in an environmentally safe way. Resource development should be geared to take into account the long and the short-term real, economic, environmental and social costs of extraction, production and marketing and also the cost of replacing the energy being developed and used. A resource development policy in this country ought to take into account the fact that we live not just on the North American continent, but on the planet earth. We need to develop our resource policy in such a way to take account of our ethical responsibility to make sure that what resources are needed for the development of human life on the whole planet are taken into account. This PetroCan does not do in the same way as the multinationals. We want to see that kind of energy development embodied in PetroCan. We want to see PetroCan able to do that as the number one energy company in this country.

I often hear that I am not being realistic, that realistic is the bottom line, that realistic is two years from now. Let me tell hon. members that realism is getting about the business of having a sane and ethically responsible energy policy now.