

Canada Oil and Gas Act

Mr. Crosbie: What is the effect, Mr. Speaker, of this bill on the market economy in the private sector? I have been outlining how, under this bill and the other bills which will come with it, the government is attempting to amass and concentrate power from the provinces, the private sector to Ottawa and from the Canadian people. That is what this bill does. I have outlined three reasons why I and my party are against this bill and why we will fight it and every piece of legislation that accompanies it to the last dot and comma as it goes through this House.

Although nothing could be more convincing than those three reasons, there is still a fourth reason. On page one, clause two of the bill, it reads:

"Canada lands" means lands that belong to Her Majesty in right of Canada—

And what does that include? It goes on to say:

(b) those submarine areas adjacent to the coast of Canada and extending throughout the natural prolongation—

In other words, this bill assumes that all the offshore area off the east coast of Canada is Canada lands owned by the Government of Canada. I say that it is not owned by the Government of Canada.

Mr. Peterson: Why don't you take us to court.

Mr. Crosbie: If hon. members opposite think that there will be an Hibernia oil development, one whiff of gas from off Labrador or Newfoundland or one "tinch" of oil above a jar from that area while the Government of Canada pretends that it is Canada lands, they can think again because the people of Newfoundland and Labrador will not give up their only chance to be self-sufficient economically. Never.

The government of Newfoundland and Labrador will not bend or be flexible on this matter. It will be completely inflexible. We did not come into confederation in 1949 with a declaration in the terms of union that the resources were to stay with the province which would then hand them over to the federal government, no matter what the courts say. We do not care what the courts say. The Supreme Court of Canada can declare that under some technical, legal ground the ownership of that resource lies with the federal government, even though the ownership of resources under land lies with the provinces but offshore it lies, for some technical, legal, picayune reason, with the federal government. That will not solve the question at all. It is not a question of law, it is a question of justice, of what is right and fitting and the fact that Canada is a confederation.

If the provinces do not have resources, they have nothing. That is why we must oppose this bill—because it is an attempt to take away the resources owned by Alberta, the resources owned by Saskatchewan and the resources owned by British Columbia. I have a report from Ralph Hedlin Associates. It is a first class piece of work and I would like to quote from it.

He says that "The commercial centre has never wished to prejudice the west; it has just wished, in a too human way, to maximize the interests of the centre, but the west has suffered as a consequence". This bill is an attempt to take the resources

back from Alberta and the west which they were given in 1930 after a tremendous struggle. What I do not understand is how hon. ladies and gentlemen opposite can be so blind. They were not blind when it came to Quebec. They seemed to get it through their skulls with respect to Quebec that the French Canadian minority there—

An hon. Member: A majority.

Mr. Crosbie: —a minority in Canada but a majority in Quebec. They felt that they would always be subject to the tyranny of an English-speaking majority in Canada and that their interests would not be recognized. This is what has been going on in Quebec for the past 40 years. Presumably the matter has been settled, largely in the past few years when this government finally understood that there was a problem. Now, I do not believe the French Canadian minority in Canada feels that it will be subject to the tyranny of the English-speaking majority.

The government fails to recognize that there is a minority in western Canada and a minority in eastern Canada which fear that they will always be subject to the tyranny of the central Canadian majority. The fear is no different from the fear of the French in Quebec. Just when the people in the west believe their day has come, they see central Canada, mobilized through the worst kind of political self-seeking by the experts in political self-seeking, the Liberal party of Canada elect, that Liberal party on a raw, crude basic appeal to central Canada to put them back in power so that they can keep the west from taking its rightful place in confederation and receiving rightful value for its resources.

Until the ladies and gentlemen opposite understand that the country is a "no show" and a "no go" with that kind of blind policy, we will be in desperate trouble. We will fight the government tooth and nail here in the House of Commons and on every stage in the country from St. John's to Vancouver. What did the Prime Minister say during the election campaign? He did not have to say much. He was lucky because he caught the swing of public opinion at a particular time. In another two or three months, the result would have been entirely different, but he was lucky in his timing.

Mr. Peterson: Don't condemn the electorate for your own failures.

Mr. Crosbie: The hon. member will not even have a look-in with the electorate next time because it is already sick of this government which fought and schemed to get into power, but has since done nothing to justify its winning the election. The Prime Minister said in Sudbury, Ontario on February 2, 1980, that "We, the Liberals, will not try to pit one province off against another. We will have responsible negotiations with the provinces and we will work out a price". That is the impression the Prime Minister tried to leave with the electorate. But ever since then, he has tried to pit one province against another. That has been his entire policy.

Our policy with respect to offshore mineral rights was contained in a letter of September 14, 1979, from the then