

*Energy Supplies Emergency Act*

Commons and my party are very fortunate in having the benefit of so many people from that part of the country who have a pretty good background in the petroleum industry.

Frankly, I am amused by the many one-day wonders on the government side, who all of a sudden have been making weighty pronouncements in the House about petroleum and all the ramifications this so-called crisis has in store for us all. I am particularly apprehensive that some of these policies may affect in a very detrimental way the part of Canada I represent.

I think the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) made an excellent speech last night. It was a thoughtful speech in which he dealt with a great many aspects of the problems involving energy. It is a great pity he did not make this speech even a year ago, because had he done so it would have been not only a great credit to himself but of immeasurable benefit to this nation. I wish he had had a bit of foresight rather than the hindsight he now has.

Mr. Speaker, I see it is getting close to six o'clock. Perhaps I might be permitted to call it six o'clock.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** It being six o'clock I do now leave the chair until 8 p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

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**AFTER RECESS**

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

**Mr. MacKay:** Mr. Speaker, at six o'clock I was in the process of saying that I thought the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources made an excellent speech yesterday in which he dealt at some length with the pertinent aspects of this country's energy policy. He mentioned some of the potential of a nuclear power strategy, he made passing reference to the potential involved in the long-range transmission of hydro power in Canada, and he dealt with possible subsidies to alleviate some of the difficulties that people in various parts of Canada will encounter. Since he is here this evening, may I point out again how much better it would have been, and how much more credit his speech would have brought him—although, granted, hindsight is easier to come by than foresight—had he made it even a few weeks ago, preferably a few months ago.

I was interested also in the intervention in this debate on Bill C-236 by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). I think that all too often the Prime Minister chooses not to intervene in the debates in this House. Of course, we are all the poorer when the prime minister of a nation does not come forward with a definitive statement of what his feelings are on important pieces of legislation.

Speaking as a member from eastern Canada, I wish to say that I was not overly comforted by what the Prime

[Mr. MacKay.]

Minister had to say or, I should say, what he had to read, but it does seem clear that he has found it necessary to admit that a pipeline should have been built and, hopefully, will be built in the not too distant future. He mentioned that initiatives must be taken to develop the Athabasca tar sands. He also mentioned that if conditions in the Atlantic region deteriorate, he is prepared to discuss some sort of welfare or social measures under the existing framework to help people in that region. I commend him for all these things, but I cannot help saying—and I do not say so with malice—that I wonder where the right hon. gentleman has been and where his government has been for the last few years.

Surely if what we have now in Canada is a crisis, it has to be, at least in some measure, a crisis of neglect. I cannot help but think, since I am a new member of the House of Commons, that in the so-called good old days, which were not that long ago, when the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) headed the government, he took a lot of abuse, as all prime ministers must, for some of the economic conditions that prevailed in Canada. However, at that time his administration introduced the concept of the Ottawa Valley line, and in so doing provided a useful climate for the Canadian oil industry in which to develop. Also in passing, since there has been a lot of comment made about general economic conditions, he has been recognized, at least in my part of Canada, as the first prime minister really to recognize the need and necessity for and the desirability of some meaningful measures to reduce regional economic disparities. He also controlled inflation.

● (2010)

The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson), one of the most able ministers in the government and a man for whom I have a great deal of respect, gave his usual speech that was full of bombast. It was a good speech, as his speeches always are, but one thing that was not characteristic of the hon. gentleman was that he appeared to deliver it from a text, as is the invariable custom of the Prime Minister. That is very unusual for that very talented minister. I could not help but think it did not quite sound like him and I had the feeling that, while he gave the speech in his usual forceful manner, his heart wasn't in it.

Nowhere in his speech did he express any reservations about what is likely to happen, in terms of the measures for which he is responsible, in attempting to reduce regional economic disparities. Nowhere did he express determination that he was going to stand up and try to persuade the Prime Minister and the cabinet that the present energy situation, by its very nature, was bound to have a serious effect upon eastern Canada. I am surprised he did not do this, because he is too astute an individual not to know that nowhere in this nation will an industry of any magnitude settle when there is a shortage of energy or any difficulty in obtaining a guaranteed source of energy.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources also made note of the necessity, as I said earlier, of possibly subsidizing the consumers in eastern Canada. Obviously, this will mean the expenditure of a great deal of money. I am not qualified to pass judgment on how much, but if a million