

Canada Oil and Gas Act

will be shared, as is the custom, with all Canadians, with one another.

Let us be honest. Without a specific legislative framework such as Bill C-48, oil companies would be able to exploit our offshore resources answerable to no authority, with no inducement to protect the environment, pay royalties or ensure Canadian participation. I do not think any Canadian would accept that. We, the national government, are negotiating a comprehensive settlement with the coastal provinces. We must exercise our responsibilities to manage and husband those precious resources. We must have the means to do so until such time as that settlement is finally achieved.

I urge all hon. members opposite to reflect quietly on their past behaviour. This House will soon have very important budgetary proposals before it. The constitutional question will require final determination by this House of Commons. So, let us get on with the job; let us get Bill C-48 on the road, and let us get on to energy self-sufficiency.

● (1630)

I should like to close by saying that I came back to this House with a certain amount of enthusiasm. I thought we were going to sit here, deliberate seriously and get on with the business of making Canada grow. I have been, in the last three hours, more than disappointed and amused. I must say that perhaps the addition of a few extra women would serve this House well because the behaviour of this House has been something I have been very, very familiar with in the north, and I would liken it to moose in rutting season.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lloyd R. Crouse (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate on Bill C-48 at the report stage. It is a bill which seeks to regulate the oil and gas interests in Canada Lands and to amend the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act.

I listened with great interest to the comments of the hon. lady, the Minister of State for Mines, the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mrs. Erola). I found some of her comments were interesting. Speaking as a Nova Scotian, it is obvious to me that she has not been in Nova Scotia lately or she would not have spoken to this House as she did.

The hon. member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson) mentioned that members from Atlantic Canada should address this particular issue. I had an opportunity to speak to this bill at second reading and I welcome this opportunity to place my arguments again before this House. In the time allotted to me I shall attempt to relate my remarks to my native province of Nova Scotia and to the economic impact which this bill, if passed in its present form, would have on our people.

I know the House will understand if I digress for a moment to mention that Nova Scotians who support the Conservative Party are today walking tall as a result of the outcome of the provincial election in my province on October 6. This election showed my party returned to power with 37 seats, while the

Liberals hold only 13, and the NDP, since it elected only one, has lost its status as a party in my province.

An hon. Member: An interim setback.

Mr. Crouse: One of the NDP members says it is "an interim setback". If you call going backwards almost to anonymity going forward, I guess it all depends on how you read the signs. We are rather pleased with this.

During the campaign our premier asked for a strong mandate so he could take a message to Ottawa indicating that Nova Scotians do not like present federal policies. This, of course, is an understatement. I learned while campaigning with the premier and my provincial colleagues that Nova Scotians at all levels of society are demanding that the federal Liberal government do something about high interest rates, about high mortgage rates, about high rentals, which are now higher than they have ever been in the history of this country; do something about the debased purchasing power of the Canadian dollar and take some action generally to fight the economic problems facing all Canadians.

This bill is related to one of the planks of our premier's program, which is to develop self-reliance in energy for Nova Scotians through resource development. To make this possible we must, of course, have a stronger say in the over-all development of our offshore resources. While of late we could not help but note the more amicable attitude taken by the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) in finally reaching an agreement between Alberta and Ottawa—which gives us some cause for hope that similar agreements may be reached in Atlantic Canada—there is, however, considerable doubt as to how this will be achieved.

The return to the House of Bill C-48 at this time, when we are faced with so many other problems in this nation, only serves to reinforce these doubts about the government's intentions. In my opinion this bill is obviously improperly worded and should be withdrawn completely from this House.

When the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources introduced this bill to the House on December 11, 1980, he called it the key element in the successful fulfilment of the government's national energy program. He waxed eloquent as he stated that our offshore regions cover an area of some 2.5 million square miles. The territories alone, he said comprise another 1.5 million square miles. Together this is what the Liberal Party calls the Canada lands, an area which is almost twice the size of the ten provinces combines.

The minister claimed that oil and gas rights have already been issued for 350 million acres in the Canada lands and that the bill will convert existing rights to the land management regime establishing it in a meaningful way. This same minister, when speaking at the report stage of Bill C-48, added insult to injury so far as we in Atlantic Canada are concerned when, as reported at page 11472 of *Hansard* of July 13, he stated: