

the authority not only to go to the companies but to the provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan in particular, or their marketing boards, and ask for the records kept and the reasons they set certain prices, or anything of that sort.

As I stated earlier, we do not know whether this power is in line with discussions that have taken place or is just another one of those foxy items placed in the bill which the opposition should scrutinize thoroughly before approving. On reading between the lines, perhaps this part of the legislation is intended to be all-encompassing so as to include domination of these particular marketing boards. We should recommend the establishment of a parliamentary committee to investigate the proper usage of this legislation should it be passed.

It is interesting to note that we had long discussions about the energy allocation board which was to be responsible for administering the oil allocation bill. Apparently it did not have too much to do and we now find, according to this bill, it is given some work by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

In his speech yesterday the minister stated three reasons for this bill, and I think they are important. The first reason was that the price of Canadian crude oil should move upward to encourage exploration and development in Canada and thereby ensure further availability of our resources. The second was that approximately one-half of Canadian crude oil production which is exported should be sold at a fair and reasonable opportunity price in the United States markets. The third was that the proceeds from the sale of oil in the U.S. at a price higher than the domestic Canadian price should be employed in order to reduce the exposition of consumers in eastern Canada. I suggest those are practical reasons. Although some of us may disagree with some of the principles, at least those are the practical reasons the minister had in bringing this bill forward.

The question I have been trying to place before this House is: Does the minister require all the powers in Clauses 2, 3 and 5 of this bill? There are nine pages of powers documented here. For this reason it is necessary that the bill be sent to a standing committee of the House for further study and amendment in order that it will really embody the principles discussed at the Federal-Provincial Conference.

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of saying a few words in respect of this energy bill, Bill C-18, designed to impose an export charge on oil products. In addition, the bill will put into law the agreements of the first ministers regarding energy prices which was settled on March 27 of this year. It also gives the federal government the power to set the price of oil if the first ministers do not reach a voluntary agreement in connection with oil prices by June 30, 1975. In addition, it proposes to compensate oil companies in respect of the price paid for oil imported into eastern Canada.

Bill C-18 is the latest plank in the ongoing saga of this government's attempt to offer a national energy policy. The structure so far has appeared very fragile, resting on weak foundations. One wonders who the real architect of

Petroleum Administration Act

this so-called ongoing national oil policy is; the minister of energy or the oil companies themselves.

● (1520)

A number of bills were introduced in the last session, and this is the latest in this session, in an effort to formulate the kind of oil policy that would benefit Canadians. It seems to me if we are to have an oil policy that makes any economic sense there are three key components which must be contained in it. First, we must ensure that Canada has control of the oil industry in this country. Second, we must move in the direction of self-sufficiency in oil for Canada. Third, we must have the ability to set and control prices of oil in this country. Let us look at those three elements as they exist today and what the New Democratic Party would like to see develop in these areas. First, regarding the control of the petroleum industry in Canada, it is shocking to recall that 91 per cent of the oil industry in this country is foreign-owned and that 99 per cent of all petroleum refining capacity is also foreign-owned.

We all know this foreign ownership means that decisions are being made by multinational companies whose primary interest is to maximize their own profits, not necessarily for the benefit of the Canadian economy. This means that decisions in respect of energy development, exploration, export of energy and price to a large degree are made outside this country and outside the parameters of the government of Canada. It also means that profits in terms of billions of dollars flow out of the country into the coffers of the multinational companies, most of which are located in the United States. It also means that to date exports have been designed primarily to serve United States markets. This has meant we have used up our inexpensive reserves of oil and natural gas which will mean that when Canada needs these commodities we will have to pay more because we will have to get oil, for example, from the expensive oil sands or from the far north. While we have been exporting our cheap energy to the United States and the American industry has been benefitting, the Canadian economy is now faced with high energy costs.

On the issue of control, the New Democratic Party called for export controls in this 29th Parliament as early as January 1973. Finally, much later the government decided to cut back some of our oil exports to the United States but nowhere sufficient to really bring about self-sufficiency or control of this vital commodity. If we are to have an oil policy which makes sense, it seems to me that we must move in the direction now of controlling the multinational oil companies through a national petroleum company. I do not mean a national petroleum company as hinted by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald). A Liberal national petroleum company would be created, it seems to me, just to compete with the private sector. I should like to have a national petroleum company that would have the power to be the only purchaser of domestic and imported oil. By being the only purchaser this national petroleum company would therefore be able to set the price of oil and determine policy in the interest of Canada so far as oil supply and development are concerned. The policy which presently exists is