

an illness in the family. If they are going to break the agreement, then we will be very disappointed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am at the disposal of the House. I would like to help the cause but I see that there is going to be debate—

Mr. Baker: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. This Bill ends the PIP program and exploration off the Newfoundland coast.

Mr. McDermid: No!

Mr. Baker: I am going to put my words on the record here in this Chamber this afternoon regardless of any agreement. I do not know of any agreement, but regardless, I am going to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On that basis, then, debate. I would like to recognize the Hon. Member—

Mr. Tobin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am here on a Friday afternoon when I generally go to my riding because I expect this Bill is going to be coming to a vote.

Mr. McDermid: Speak to your House Leader.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is not a point of order, it is debate. I appreciate what the Hon. Member has just said.

Mr. Tobin: They are trying to shut us down.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): It is debate and the Hon. Member for Laval-des-Rapides (Mr. Garneau) has the floor.

[Translation]

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, I do not know exactly what transpired in a discussion by various Members of this House, but before I start my speech on Bill C-85, perhaps I should mention that this morning I was talking to my hon. friend from Cape-Breton-The Sydneys (Mr. MacLellan) about my speech this afternoon and along what lines it would be. He never indicated there had been an agreement on limiting the number of speeches.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that today we are beginning a very important phase in the way this country is going to manage its limited and non-renewable gas and oil reserves.

In fact, Bill C-85 is an almost definitive step towards the abolition of a national energy policy. This policy, with its weaknesses, strengths and shortcomings, had three objectives. The first was exploration; the second was to achieve increasing Canadian control; and the third was to protect producers and consumers against substantial price fluctuation.

Mr. Speaker, this objective was perhaps too ambitious. And it was perhaps difficult to achieve, not only in the North American context but also in the world energy context. The

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fact remains there was at least one very specific objective which was to provide for increasing Canadian control over exploration, distribution and Canadianization.

But why should we have a national energy policy in the first place, with, granted, its strengths and its weaknesses? First of all, because the market theory was no longer workable. In fact, since the middle seventies, a group of producing countries had decided to use production control as a means of artificially raising prices. So there was no more free market as we know it, that is, freedom for both buyers and sellers. Furthermore, the number of participants in the market was becoming increasingly limited. And the impact of the activities of this cartel was considerable in terms of excessive profits being enjoyed by an increasingly limited number of participants.

I want to get back to the national energy policy. It did have its weaknesses, which could have been corrected, I will not deny that. The national energy policy was perhaps too ambitious. If the Conservative Government had been willing, it could have limited the scope of the policy through legislation and Government programs. It could have changed or adjusted the policy.

But now, Bill C-85 creates a situation where there will be no Government of Canada to oversee the administration of this limited and non-renewable resource, which is now in the hands of a very limited number of producers.

Mr. Speaker, there will be no more national energy policy. And as for the law of the market, when people say: "Now the market will determine the price", do we really have a free market when producing countries decide to cut production in order to control prices? Do we really have a free market? Can we talk about market laws when four or five producing countries can determine the price millions of consumers will have to pay for this very important commodity? Is there a free market when independent producers are at the mercy of four or five buyers? Can we say the market place is working when we find ourselves in a situation such that the Premier of a province gets in touch with an Arab leader in an attempt to control production so as to boost prices?

Mr. Speaker, if we are to have an energy policy established by a few countries or a handful of producers, why should that policy not be set here in the House by the elected representatives of all Canadians? Mr. Speaker, do we want energy prices and exploration methods to be determined by OPEP members who may or may not agree among themselves? Is all that going to depend on the odd phone call between the Alberta Premier and Sheik Yamani?

Mrs. Maily: No, no!

Mr. Garneau: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member may take the floor anytime she wants, but she should refrain from interrupting Members who are serious about this matter. She should speak to her friend the Premier of Alberta.