

Energy

ister as "The Artless Dodger". On Friday the Prime Minister went to British Columbia to make a speech. If he intends to keep on making this kind of speech on a weekly basis his office should get in contact with the television networks again and the networks might be induced to pick up this new Canadian game show which could appropriately be entitled "The Baiting Game". If the offending premier of the region should get baited into a fight the Prime Minister would go into a playoff in which he plays off one part of the country against another.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Last Friday the target was the premier of Alberta. The technique was for the Prime Minister to pay tribute to his own foresight and with his impeccable use of language, always eloquent, he said the Premier of Alberta had been caught with his pants down. Well, as to his foresight, the Canadian people realize that the only reason Quebec and the Atlantic provinces are threatened with the oil shortage this winter is that the Prime Minister got caught with his own pants down. Despite years of warning, his government did not extend the pipeline to Montreal. It did not even act to increase storage facilities and build up the supply to a 90-day level as it had been recommended it should do. Surely, it is really strange what the Prime Minister can foresee and what he cannot foresee when it suits his purpose.

In the course of his Thursday explanation of a decision to seek extension of the voluntary freeze on the price of domestic crude, he said that when the freeze was originally set to terminate at the end of January—that is when he announced it in that fashion on September 4—that at that time, according to the Prime Minister's latest scenario, few if any people could have foreseen the sudden rise in international oil prices that would ensue as a result of the Middle East hostilities. That, of course, was a beautifully irrelevant assertion, because that circumstance has nothing to do with the duration of the freeze although it might very well have something to do with the extent of any permissible increase in prices. In fact, the Prime Minister cannot trace back any unexpected world development which should really have changed his commitment announced on September 4. All that has changed has been the Prime Minister's position, and that evidently changed sometime between his television address on November 22 and last Thursday afternoon.

On television he said, "the price freeze in its present form will end in January". Two days prior to the television statement, on November 20, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) put a question to the Prime Minister about the freeze. In his answer the Prime Minister referred the House to his statement of September 4 to the effect that the government had obtained agreement from the major petroleum companies to accept a voluntary freeze until January 31. The Prime Minister said:

This is the undertaking I gave and this is the undertaking which I believe they—

The companies.

—intend to respect.

I do not intend to blow my horn about foresight when I say I did not believe the Prime Minister, and therefore could not believe the Minister of Energy, Mines and

[Mr. Stanfield.]

Resources (Mr. Macdonald), on any of the umpteen times they said this original commitment would be honoured.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Now, whether or not I trust a statement by the Prime Minister of this country may not be of much importance, but the Prime Minister stressed on Thursday the importance of the development of the energy resources that this country will require in the future. Surely, trust and confidence in prime ministerial statements is important if we are to get on with that job. I know there are some who may assess all this simply as slick politics, and others who, in some warped fashion are saying this is the way to make parliament work. I do not have any sympathy with either point of view because in betraying its word a government without integrity may have purchased a temporary survival in power. I say simply this to those whose concern does not extend to the victims of this particular breach of word,—

● (1530)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield:—I caution them to think about the victims that the next breach of word may bring.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I ask the House to think about another large number of victims of the policy announced by the Prime Minister, those Canadians who live in Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces. How will these people feel about these policies? How can any prime minister describe an energy policy as a national policy when it divides the country, when it leaves half the country almost out in the cold, at least until 1980?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: On Thursday, the Prime Minister said—

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: The hon. member had better wait. He may learn something from this.

Mr. Baker: We know him; he won't learn a thing.

Mr. Stanfield: I quote what the Prime Minister said on Thursday:

The Canadian market for oil will no longer be divided in two, one for domestically produced oil and another for imported oil. It will thus be a "one-Canada", not a "two-Canada" oil policy.

That is simply not so, not until 1980, even on the Prime Minister's own statement. We can all agree with the expressed aim of self-sufficiency by the end of the decade. Personally, I have to agree because I have said a number of times that self-sufficiency is desirable. In fact, I think we have it today, except in terms of our ability to distribute the oil.

An hon. Member: You see it differently from where you sit.