

Government Orders

government has failed miserably to ensure these fundamental principles of a national energy policy.

I am approaching the end of my speech, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate that you allowed me a little bit of latitude because, again, I think that is the issue at hand. It is not the point of time allocation or closure. This government forces us to discuss that either directly or indirectly, but once again the semantic wrangling of what record it has set, or what records it has not set on time allocation and closure is totally irrelevant to the Canadian public.

We ask that we vote down this closure time allocation and we spend as much time as necessary, because I believe every member of the New Democratic Party would like to speak against the privatization of PetroCan.

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to share some of my views on the sale of PetroCan and the proposed privatization of PetroCan.

Before I do, I want to report a few comments by the Hon. Marc Lalonde in an interview where he was asked by Rosemary Brown:

Wasn't PetroCan supposed to protect us? The consumers against the vagaries of the market and the kind inconsistent behaviour and buffeting around that happens out there?

Mr. Lalonde's reply was:

No. That was never the purpose of Petro-Canada.

Then Peter Gzowski posed the question:

So the privatization of Petro-Canada is irrelevant to what's happening to oil prices now?

The Hon. Mr. Lalonde said "Absolutely". Then further, Mr. Lalonde responded by saying:

—if the Government of Canada can get a good price for us as the taxpayers by privatization, by privatizing Petro-Canada if we can keep it as a Canadian under Canadian ownership, I don't see that it is essential to the national interest that Petro-Canada should be forever government owned.

It is interesting that we have those replies and those statements on record with regard to privatization. They are the views of a former Liberal minister of energy, someone who sat in this House for a good many years. I think it is important to have that on record.

I want to share a few of my views regarding Canada's energy policy. The objectives which largely remain as articulated in 1984 are these: to promote the efficient development and use of Canada's energy resources; to assure security of energy supply; and to increase the flexibility, the diversity, and the competitiveness of the Canadian energy economy. These goals are largely being achieved through the implementation of appropriate framework policies.

The government's deregulation of energy markets has freed Canadian industry and consumers to protect and further their own best interests in the marketplace and has eliminated the artificial constraints that previously bound trade. The establishment of a stable investment framework has provided the certainty investors need to make decisions about where and how to develop new supplies. The non-discriminatory, non-interventionist, land management regime, which we in co-operation with the coastal provinces have implemented in Canada's offshore areas, has provided the terms necessary to attract companies to economic development prospects on the frontiers. The use of profits based taxation and of targeted incentives have stimulated increased investment in the Canadian oil and gas industry.

These framework policies have been supplemented by specific policies or programs that deal with particular issues. The creation of opportunities for Canadian ownership of the domestic petroleum industry is best achieved by making the industry an attractive place to invest, and that is what we want to do. We have done this.

We have also continued through Investment Canada to review proposed acquisitions of oil and gas companies in Canada and to disallow acquisition of healthy Canadian owned firms. The level of Canadian ownership and control has declined in recent years due to the sale of companies in financial difficulty and some rationalization which took place in the industry. The level of Canadianization increased during 1989, and there remain good opportunities for expanded Canadian ownership as the industry's economic prospects improve over the next decade.

Security of energy supply means that Canadians can be confident in their access to competitively priced energy