

Senator Frith: "Try offshore resources"? I fully intend to, as soon as Senator Marshall is through with the intervention on Senator Cook's inquiry. I hope to come back to that favourite theme.

As I was saying, the fact that a complete, simple answer eludes us does not prevent the present government—as it did not prevent the previous government—from taking what it conceives to be bold initiatives to solve the problem. In our opinion, such an initiative is the Special Investment Tax Credit Program that is the subject of this inquiry.

We hope, and we feel sure, that the program will do much to attract industry to those specially identified areas of Canada which we all agree sorely need economic development and any benefit that programs of this kind can bring to them.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, as no other senator wishes to speak, this inquiry is considered as having been debated.

● (1520)

ENERGY

GOVERNMENT POLICY—MOTION TO REFER SUBJECT MATTER OF INQUIRY TO BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE—ORDER STANDS

On the Order:

Resuming the debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Murray, seconded by the Honourable Senator Flynn, P.C.:

That the subject-matter of the inquiry of the Honourable Senator Argue, P.C., which appeared on the Orders of the Day on November 20, 1980, be referred to the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce.—(*Honourable Senator Frith*).

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, in view of the question asked by Senator Murray during Question Period, perhaps I can be permitted to make a comment about this inquiry.

I am quite prepared to yield or to offer the adjournment of this inquiry to any other senator. However, to repeat what I said earlier today in explanation of my not dealing with it, I intend, as long as it is in my name, to stand it at least until I am satisfied that we are not going to receive the principal legislative packages on the National Energy Program, namely, Bills C-48 and C-57. If another senator wishes to speak on the subject matter of the NEP and therefore wishes to take the adjournment, I freely offer that opportunity.

I repeat, because I do not want to mislead, that I intend to continue standing this order for at least another week, and perhaps two weeks, until I get the impression that we shall not be getting that legislation. If we do not get a substantial piece

of legislation on the same subject, then I think we should look at it again.

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, in response to that, I simply want to say that, while we will be receiving from the other place Bill C-57 and Bill C-48 in due course, and while these bills do have something to do with the National Energy Program, my purpose in putting down a motion to refer the National Energy Program to a committee was to enable senators to examine such matters as the supply and demand forecasts that have been presented by the government in its National Energy Program, the conflicting forecasts that have been made by the industry in the producing provinces, and a variety of other matters that are certainly not likely to be resolved in the debates on Bills C-48 and C-57 when they come to this house.

Arguably, we can get at those matters when Bills C-48 and C-57 go to committee. However, at that time the committee will be under the gun from the government to get those particular pieces of legislation through. My concern is with the medium and longer term problem of the validity and the wisdom of the National Energy Program. There are enough people in the Senate who have experience in and knowledge of this matter who I think could make a considerable contribution to a longer investigation of those questions.

However, I will leave it at that for the moment. If the government is prepared to give us sufficient latitude, and if Bills C-57 and C-48 are referred to committee, all well and good. If not, I am going to try again and again to get the National Energy Program, in general, and the bases of that policy studied by a committee of the Senate.

The Hon. the Speaker: What is your wish, honourable senator?

Senator Frith: Honourable senators, I ask that the order stand.

Hon. G. I. Smith: Just for convenience, I wonder whether the honourable senator has before him the page reference of *Hansard* which will indicate when this matter was last debated.

Senator Frith: That is with regard to item No. 8 on the Order Paper?

Senator Smith: Yes.

Senator Frith: No, I do not, but it has been a matter of months. I believe that I took the adjournment, did I not, Senator Murray?

Senator Murray: Yes.

Senator Frith: Therefore, only Senator Murray has spoken on this matter.

Order stands.

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.