

*Canada Oil and Gas Act***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**CANADA OIL AND GAS ACT**

## MEASURES RESPECTING OIL AND GAS INTERESTS

The House resumed, from Wednesday, October 21, consideration of Bill C-48, to regulate oil and gas interests in Canada lands and to amend the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works, and Motions Nos. 7, 8 and 9 (Mr. Andre for Mr. Wilson), Motions Nos. 10, 11 and 12 (Mr. Skelly), Motions Nos. 13 and 15 (Mr. Andre for Mr. Wilson), and Motions Nos. 16 and 41 (Mr. Skelly).

**Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, at this time, I should like to speak to the amendments before the House this afternoon. It is my intention to participate in the debate on the amendments, but since this is the first time I am speaking on the bill, I should like to give you a few impressions that I have gained from serving on the committee which led to the report stage in the House.

All hon. members on both sides of the House agree this is a very important bill. I happen to think some aspects of the bill are more important than the Constitution, Mr. Speaker. At this particular time we are debating this bill with indecent haste because, in the government's view, they have other priorities. We have to dispose of these mundane things in order that we may deal with the Constitution and with matters relating to the economy. People throughout the country are beginning to be very suspicious about the constitutional matters. With the Constitution being thrown in every time we are discussing something of importance, the people are beginning to get the feeling that they are engulfed in a smokescreen to disguise the real intentions of the government and some real, important issues.

Bill C-48, Mr. Speaker, will establish a pattern of government behaviour which will have far-reaching consequences and effects. I am not overly concerned or frightened when foreign countries make comments on what we do here, but it concerns me when our colleagues or counterparts in the United States, senators and congressmen, go to visit the President and demand that certain laws in the United States be enacted, laws which would have the effect of bringing reciprocal action to the kind of measures proposed in Bill C-48. In the history of western countries—at least not within the time we have participated in the association of western economies through OECD—there has never been a precedent where a government would go wantonly and deliberately and confiscate the assets of private corporations—and I am using the word “confiscate” advisedly—regardless whether these assets belong to companies of a domestic or Canadian origin or are of a foreign nature. That kind of approach to economic nationalism is one we cannot expect our trading partners and associates in the economic world, at least in the western economic world, to live with or put up with.

The United States has an act known as the 1948 Minerals Act. Under that act, upon the evidence that a foreign country is acting against United States companies operating in that foreign country, the administration is compelled to initiate immediate reciprocal action. We can only speculate what that reciprocal action might be eventually. I hope it is no secret to any hon. member of the House or to anyone listening outside that there are all kinds of Canadian companies operating in the United States and in other economic theatres throughout the world. Indeed, our national oil company operates in the North Sea. It is planning to go to Senegal. It is planning to go to the South China Sea. It is planning not only to be a window to the energy sector in Canada, but it is planning to be a window and a partner among multinational companies operating throughout the world. I would assume that if Petro-Canada had any intention to operate in the United States, we would expect some of their assets, which are the assets of Canadian taxpayers, might be confiscated there. Bill C-48 basically does this.

I served on the committee, Mr. Speaker, and at no time in my nine years of experience in the House have I been presented with a bill in committee that was so shoddily drafted in the first go around. Bill C-48 has 85 clauses in it. The government tabled 115 amendments to the 85 clauses in the bill.

**An hon. Member:** Flexibility.

**Mr. Oberle:** Flexibility, my hon. friend says. The government took no care at all. They were flying by the seat of their pants. They were testing the waters. They were flying some kites. Both opposition parties made a number of amendments.

We had every reason to believe and expect that the government would bring in measures to regulate the oil and gas industry. For the last ten years, the industry has been very anxious to learn what the measures would be. We have been questioning the government as to when they would bring in measures which would bring about stability to and confidence in the energy sector, confidence that was required by the oil companies. Serious decisions had to be made in order to maintain some kind of energy self-sufficiency in our country. After 1973, that had been lost and measures had to be taken to regain energy self-sufficiency. We are told by the government it will cost between \$300 billion and \$500 billion today to regain energy self-sufficiency in our country. Several multinational oil companies have to know what the government's intentions are with respect to land use policies in the north and with respect to regulations in the north that would affect their decisions.

The oil companies now know, if they are of foreign origin, that they are no longer operating in Canada under the same rules. If they are of foreign origin, irrespective of their contribution or the work they have done in our country before, irrespective of the pioneering spirit exhibited by the multinational oil companies, who came mostly from the United States, in developing our energy sector in the first place, they are now no longer wanted; and if they want to operate in Canada, they have to have at least 50 per cent Canadian ownership before