

*The Address—Mr. Greene*

the Prairie provinces, about 45 per cent in British Columbia and the balance of 25 per cent east of Manitoba. The amount of gas authorized to be exported over the 15 to 20-year period of the licences is 6.3 trillion cubic feet, compared with 8.9 trillion cubic feet sought by the applicants. The export revenue to Canada from the gas to be exported over the period of the licences is approximately \$2 billion.

I point out that the term of the sales was shortened by the board in its decision—some to 15 years and some to 20 years from the 25 years which was the general period of the applications. It is interesting to note that throughout the course of our history in exporting surplus energy resources we have greatly diminished the term of the export, to the greater protection of the downstream Canadian consumer. We originally exported in 1910 or 1911 hydroelectric energy for periods of up to 85 years. We now find that a shorter period will give greater protection to future Canadians. The period in question is the shortest to be found in the history of such decisions.

Canada, Mr. Speaker, has energy resources in very great abundance. It is estimated, on the basis of geological factors, that Canada's reserves of natural gas could amount to 725 trillion cubic feet. We should judge this decision for the export of 6.3 trillion cubic feet within those parameters. Our proved oil reserves exceed 10 billion barrels, and potential conventional reserves have been estimated at 120 billion barrels, of which 25 billion barrels may be on our eastern continental shelf. In addition, the oil sands of Alberta have reserves estimated at 300 billion barrels. We have 28 per cent of the world's proved reserves of uranium, which a rapidly advanced technology will one day make a principal source of energy in Canada. Furthermore, we have very large reserves of good grade coal in western Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, a resource policy and more particularly an energy policy is a question of priorities. These priorities may change in time, but our statutes and our present policy clearly reflect certain basic national objectives.

First, we promote the development of our abundant natural wealth. Second, we try to make available to consumers a variety of cheap energy sources. Third, we advocate the marketing of our surplus of energy to foreign countries, thus improving our balance of trade and our opportunities to carry on and even to accelerate our exploration programs. Fourth, we are anxious also to protect our national security both as regards both the availability of resources and the capacity to develop and use them.

● (3:50 p.m.)

[English]

It has long been the policy of Canada that all resources clearly established to be surplus to Canadian needs are to be developed and sold with broadening economic benefit to Canada. Almost a decade ago the decision was made by Parliament, not the government, that the decision as to what was surplus to Canadian needs ought to be made on the basis of scientific determination and not left to the whimsy of the political marketplace, as the leader of the New Democratic Party apparently would have it.

[Mr. Greene.]

In pursuit of this policy the National Energy Board was established and charged with the responsibility of determining what of our resources were to be considered disposable surplus. The board has developed an establishment of some 170 people, including scientists, engineers, accountants and economists. It has access to all the government's geological and other scientific determinations and is privy to confidential records of the industry not generally available to the public.

The board was aware in 1969 that new circumstances were developing in the natural gas industry and felt that the forthcoming major public hearing on gas exports would provide an excellent opportunity for the board to reconsider the criteria and practices by which it had in the past dealt with applications for gas export licences. It therefore asked applicants and interested parties to advise the board of their views as to whether the board should alter its criteria and, if so, what new criteria should be used.

The parties interested in these matters responded generously with thoughtful, constructive and cogent advice to the board on the criteria which the board used to determine Canadian requirements for natural gas, the measurement of supplies against which surplus is determined and pricing arrangements in the export markets. Thus, the board had the benefit of knowledgeable advice from all provinces from Quebec west to British Columbia and from all sectors of the natural gas industry, the producers, the transmission companies, the distributors and the consumers.

The board deliberated over a considerable period. Applications were first received in May of 1969 and the board considered until August, 1970, when its decision was rendered. The public hearing on these applications was held in Ottawa, commencing November 25, 1969, and ending March 20, 1970, occupying 54 days and resulting in over 6,000 pages of transcript. Some 150 exhibits were filed and representations were heard from more than 40 parties. The results of the Energy Board's deliberations on these matters are contained in the board's report to the Governor in Council dated August, 1970, which many hon. members no doubt have seen. I commend it as excellent reading to anyone who genuinely wishes to obtain an understanding of the economics of our natural gas resources and wishes to contribute in a positive sense, rather than in the realm of political profit, to Canada's natural gas policy. On the basis of this expertise and information, the National Energy Board determined that the 6.3 trillion cubic feet was surplus to Canadian needs and was available for export.

Mr. Speaker, it may be that there exists somewhere an equally competent group of scientists who are prepared to challenge the findings of the National Energy Board in this regard. If so, the government would welcome their advice. What we are interested in is facts and figures, not ill-informed conclusions based upon inadequate investigation and incomplete facts and manipulated so as to fan the passions of narrow or demagogic chauvinism. The temerity of the leader of the NDP is somewhat striking when he says the National Energy Board is wrong. He