

*Government Orders*

When Alberta and Saskatchewan joined in 1905 they were placed under the same restriction as Manitoba had been since 1870. I am absolutely convinced, as I look at the National Energy Program, that it was not simply a visceral reaction that I had to the National Energy Program, it was also a reaction to the underlying philosophy that in certain areas of ownership, we the Prairie provinces were not going to act in the national interest.

I think that charge has never been substantiated and I think it is wrong in every one of its terms. We have always acted in the national interest. We have asked for that natural resource to be given the same kind of pricing mechanism, the same kind of market approach as any other commodity. That is what we asked for.

• (1600)

I remember the bumper stickers during the height of the National Energy Program. I do not have to repeat what they said. My colleagues opposite know what they were. Did it help federal-provincial relations? No. Did it help understanding between western Canadians and other Canadians? No. To this day we can still go into some parts of the country and they will remind us of that period. Surely we do not want to go back to that.

I remember in 1979—and maybe I should throw my notes away—the short period of time I was Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and responsible for energy north of 60. I wrote a letter to the then two governments of the territories telling them that as minister I expected them to act as if responsible government had been passed in law. It was known as the Epp letter. It still has not been rescinded to this day. Coming from the Prairies as I do, I had the feeling that people living north of 60 had the same ability to govern themselves as I thought we had south of 60.

I remember a predecessor, a former Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, saying to me: “Jake, I think on the constitutional issue you are probably right, but remember on the matter of natural resources, particularly oil and gas, that those resources belong to Ontario”. I said to him: “You mean Canada”. He said: “No, no. It is our ace in the hole against the west”. It is

that bottom line that drives me also on this issue of Petro-Canada.

I say to my hon. friends with all the charity I have that it is more than simply a philosophical argument about privatizing a company or not privatizing a company. The real issue is: How do we develop our resources for the benefit of Canada? How do we increase those reserves?

Let us take a look at what our reserves increased after the National Energy Program. Do you know what was happening with our reserves, Mr. Speaker? Obviously there is not going to be cash flow. They will leave it in the ground. That was what was happening.

Today, my hon. friends mentioned the reserves we have in natural gas and oil. Despite the fact that in the western sedimentary basin we are losing according to my last statistics about 1.1 per cent, our production this last 12 months was less than we had projected. We know we have to increase our production in heavy oil. That is why Lloydminster. We know we have to get into the east coast. That is why Hibernia, Terra Nova, Ben Nevis, and hopefully Cohasset-Panuke this year. That is why we did the Vancouver Island pipeline. That is why we changed the energy policy in respect to the National Energy Board that we can get export licences and we can move gas, for instance, into the U.S. northeast, into California, or into the midwest through Emerson. That is why, as I get that cash flow I know I get more energy. That is what has always driven the industry.

I remember opening up Leduc I, not in 1947 but just this last year. It is a museum piece today. There was a gentleman there who had been on Leduc in 1947, a sod buster from Saskatchewan who knew nothing about the oil industry as a young roughneck on that rig in 1947. He knew something about drilling water. He said: “We did it. We brought in a new industry. We did it because we knew we could do it. We didn’t need the government behind us, but we knew Canadians would support us”.

Petro-Canada is mature enough today with its controls and conditions that I believe it should be privatized. Canadians should invest in it. Canadians should be proud of it. Most of all, through that investment Canadians will ensure their energy resources much more than if it is held in the hands of whatever the name of the energy minister of the day might be.