

decided by Parliament, because I see that as being negative to the country.

Let us consider the attitude of the people in the north. I worry about northern development, particularly with the attitude this government has. If everything north of the 60th parallel will be defined as Canada lands, I have had enough experience and have talked to enough people to know that the people of the Yukon and the residents of the Northwest Territories see themselves first as Canadians, and what they want is to see development in those regions so as to stop depending on the federal money which pours into that area. Just look at the budgets. They want to stand on their own feet because they have earned that income and thus are contributing to Canada. I have not met people north of 60 who say: Just give us those mineral resources and we will show you what we will do to you in the south. That is just not their attitude. Their attitude is that those who live in the north should have the first benefits from those resources. Surely that is the fair and equitable manner in which to proceed.

I wanted to spend most of my time putting forward my views of Canada. However, the parliamentary secretary who spoke made one point to which I should like to respond. I do not want to spend all my time rebutting that which has been said on the other side.

That hon. member said that the former Prime Minister, the right hon. member for Yellowhead (Mr. Clark), had his bluff called in February 1980 in that he had not been willing to put in the form of an agreement a promise he had made in a letter regarding the offshore ownership by the provinces. I want to say to that member as sincerely as I can, and I am sure he will accept that, the reason was not that the Prime Minister or this party reneged on its view of the offshore, but rather that we had been defeated in this House and there was an election campaign in process. The then Prime Minister stated very clearly that he did not believe it was his parliamentary right to commit a future government to the position in which this government finds itself without receiving a mandate from the people of Canada.

I think that is the manner in which parliamentary democracy functions, and I suggest to the parliamentary secretary that those were the facts of that question. The former Prime Minister had committed his government but he obviously needed a mandate to put it into agreement form.

What I am saying to hon. members on the opposite side is that I believe this amendment is in the interests of Canada. I suggest that because the matter is before the courts we should not proceed along the lines the government has suggested, but rather along the lines of the amendment the member for St. John's East has proposed to this House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Maltais (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, may I call it six o'clock?

Canada Oil and Gas Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At six o'clock, the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please. When the House took recess at six o'clock, the Chair had recognized the hon. member for Manicouagan.

Mr. Maltais: Mr. Speaker, I am almost embarrassed to speak before such a large audience. I think there are people here from all over the country who have come to hear us. I am all the more happy to take part in this debate on Bill C-48 as for the people of my generation, for the younger generation of Canadians, this is indeed an extremely important measure which seeks to place Canada lands under the control of the government of Canada for purposes of exploring and developing the oil and gas deposits found in those lands which are, of course, owned by the government of Canada.

I listened this afternoon to the remarks of some colleagues who were in fact saying that the major problem was directly related to the area of the coast of Newfoundland or British Columbia, because these offshore resources belong to the provinces or fall under provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to deal tonight not so much with the letter but with the spirit of this legislation. As I listened this afternoon to all those who spoke against the bill, with all kinds of variations, of course, I realized that it was mainly because of legal issues and technicalities that they were opposed to it, because they pitted provincial jurisdiction against federal jurisdiction. Now, Mr. Speaker, to really understand Bill C-48 which is before us, we must go back to our Constitution and see how things have evolved since 1867. At the time the Fathers of Confederation drafted the British North America Act, the term natural resources applied to resources found in all four provinces then making up the Canadian Confederation, namely lumber, fisheries and fur. That is what was meant by resources at the time.

At the time, all provinces enjoyed justice and equality. However, the situation gets a little more complicated in the twentieth century when one resource is required by all the people of the country. When can a province claim rights over a natural resource and set its price, and when should the federal government do so? That relates to the spirit of the law more than to the letter of the law, as I was saying before. Our country was founded on a concept of sharing. In this regard, I believe that in the east as well as in the west there has been a time since Confederation where some region or another has had to pay for the rest of the country. There was the case of