

Canada Oil and Gas Act

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1630)

Mr. Waddell: I wonder if the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. MacLaren) would permit one question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I think the rules are known, and this could be done only with unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): There is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. MacLaren), it is difficult to know whether to laugh or to cry. It is inconceivable that any responsible parliamentarian could be so far out of touch with what in fact is happening and the reality of what is going on. He paints a picture of a glorious Canadian oil and gas industry working to its limit, expanding the economic horizons of the nation, finding the oil and gas we will need, and Canadians in great abundance participating.

What in fact is the reality? I would like to quote from an address to the Ontario Petroleum Institute by William Riedl, chairman and chief executive officer of Alfred Bunting and Co., Limited, on October 20, 1981, so it is just three weeks old and is up to date information. He stated:

The outlook for the Canadian Petroleum Industry at this moment is very bleak. Step by step the Canadian Federal Government has increased its control over an industry it neither understands nor trusts. Only recently Energy Minister Lalonde declared that IPAC (Independent Petroleum Association of Canada) lacks credibility. We are drifting further away from the three simple goals established by the federal government's National Energy Program initially outlined in October 1980. The first goal of security of supply is becoming unreachable with respect to oil as energy companies defer projects such as Alsands, Cold Lake and exploratory drilling due the inadequate expected returns on investment. The Canadian Petroleum Association has called the NEP and the recent Energy Agreement a disaster for the petroleum industry and concluded that Canadian oil self-sufficiency by 1990 is impossible. The second goal of an equitable energy price was recently negotiated by the two levels of government (Federal and Alberta) but with the exclusion of a very important third party—The Petroleum Industry. The result was two happy governments and a short-changed petroleum industry; not to mention the poor consumer. As one industry commentator said recently, both governments acted like 'pigs at the trough'. The third goal, Canadianization, is also seriously in trouble due to overstrained balance sheets. Enough of the overview, let us look at some statistical facts.

Then he goes on to outline statistical facts; not simple assertions by a parliamentary secretary who either has no respect for the truth or knows not of what he speaks, but facts which point out that every single observation made by the parliamentary secretary is in fact phony and untrue.

The parliamentary secretary said during the course of his remarks that Canada has the most generous fiscal arrangements for oil and gas exploration in the world. That statement could have been made by a candidate for the flat earth society, because if he believes that, he believes the world is flat. The people who spend the money, the people who are actually

putting up their money and drilling for oil and gas, are leaving Canada in droves. Over half of the drilling capacity of this country has left. Canadians who the parliamentary secretary believes should be overjoyed at the good things the federal government has done for them have left Canada. They have given up on Canada. We have driven them out of our country.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Andre: To this the parliamentary secretary says, "How wonderful things are, and what a great opportunity Canadians have for participating in what is going on!"

The Fraser Institute estimates that next year Canadian companies will be drilling 10,000 oil and gas wells in the United States. By comparison, they will be drilling 5,000 in Canada. The Canadians who should be overjoyed at what the parliamentary secretary and his minister have done will be exploring twice as much in the United States as in Canada. In response to this, he replies, "How marvellously pleased they are at the National Energy Program." If the whole population of Alberta were to migrate to Montana, I doubt the people could stand the glee. I am sure they would collapse and die from the sheer joy which would overwhelm them. I imagine there would be a party lasting for months when that last oil and gas executive leaves Canada. When that last rig goes, the Liberal party will have a month-long celebration of the tremendous success of the National Energy Program!

As I say, it is hard to know whether to laugh or cry. The fact of the matter is that the National Energy Program is supposed to achieve energy self-sufficiency. The National Energy Board is an organization set up by the government, and all the appointees were made by this government. The board has a large staff of experts. They studied the question of self-sufficiency for months with public hearings across the country. They concluded that not only will we not be self-sufficient by 1990, but that we will probably not be self-sufficient until the next century. The reply of the government is: "No, we will be self-sufficient". Why? Because the minister said so, and how could we question that?

One will not believe a bunch of people at the National Energy Board who only spent months studying the subject. One will not believe the Economic Council. Certainly, one will not believe the Independent Petroleum Association of Canada. After all, they are in the industry and cannot be trusted. One will not believe the Canadian Petroleum Association. Those are big companies and cannot be trusted. No, what one will believe is the kind of pap—nonsense—put forward by the minister and his parliamentary secretary.

The reality is that the National Energy Program and Bill C-48, which is the fallout from it, are only peripherally related to Canada's energy security. The real motive was indicated, and I am sure inadvertently, by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) when he spoke in Sherbrooke, Quebec, on October 22 of this year, as reported by the Canadian Press. I quote from the Press report:

Lalonde said a stronger threat to Canadian unity than Quebec nationalism could soon be posed by the growing wealth of Alberta. Canada, he said, could