

Petro-Canada Act

I hope, as this debate unfolds and some of the other legislation comes before the House, that I will again have a chance to make some remarks, but I believe that it is appropriate to get this piece of legislation before committee at the earliest opportunity so that witnesses can be brought forward and a much better understanding of the National Energy Program can evolve at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I will not take long if the House is ready for the question, but I think you will discover that there will be another speaker from the other side after me.

This bill, Bill C-101, is the first of eight bills evolving from that enormous, outrageous and atrocious package that was originally presented to the House by an arrogant government. However, I wonder what we accomplished, because the hon. member from the New Democratic Party appeared to have written a speech in preparation for an omnibus bill, and the fact that it was broken up was not going to deter him from reading the speech which had been written for the omnibus bill. He went on and on to deal with all kinds of matters which had nothing to do with Bill C-101. After having listened to the hon. member it is hard to tell whether he is just dumb or doctrinaire.

An hon. Member: Both.

Mr. Andre: The New Democratic Party is obviously stuck in its reactionary posture. They have one answer for every problem: more government agencies, more Crown corporations, more state ownership, more regulations, and they call that progressive. Socialism was a progressive and new idea 60 years ago, and it looked attractive then. Even 40 years ago it was an idea which seemed to provide some hope for people who were in the midst of a depression. However, you would think that after 60 years of experience with socialism around the world where it has not worked anywhere at any time, people would learn from it. In a recent issue of *Maclean's* magazine, Northrop Frye said that the only way that you can see the future is by looking into the rear-view mirror. Apparently, the NDP looks back, sees the experience of 60 years of socialism in the Soviet Union, and in other countries to a lesser degree, and refuses to learn from that experience that socialism simply does not work. It has never worked. It has been tried extensively in many cultures and in all kinds of countries and it has not worked. It will not work. It certainly has not worked in the oil industry. There is not one state-owned oil company in the world, of which there are many because there are many people in other countries with the same philosophy as the NDP who insist that state oil companies are the direction in which to head, that comes anywhere close to the performance of a privately-owned oil company of equal size. However, the NDP say we should do the same thing. It makes you wonder why they do not learn from that experience.

This bill proposes to transfer another \$5 billion to Petro-Canada. My colleague from Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes) commented in his remarks on the fact that at this time in Canadian history, with the economy in the state it is in, on the day after we voted on a bill which would take \$5 billion out of moneys available for education and health care, it seems perverse for us to be transferring \$5 billion over to a group of people who are not accountable to the House or to the people of Canada in any respect. They are people who are appointed by the minister. One such person is Joel Bell, a good friend of the Liberal Party. He knows nothing about the oil industry, but he is a good friend of the Liberal party. I could go down the list. Interestingly enough, some people who initially joined Petro-Canada did know the oil industry and were knowledgeable and could have made a contribution, but they quit. Don Wolcott is an expert oil man. He has a tremendous reputation. He knows how to find oil. He did not last very long. He quit. The president of Petro-Canada, Andy Janisch, is an expert oil man with an excellent reputation. He knows how to find oil. He quit and joined Canadian Superior, a 100 per cent foreign-owned oil company. When Mr. Janisch quit, I understand there were seven vice-presidents who submitted their resignations but were talked out of resigning at that point in time because of the damage their resignations would do to the company. Yet my friends here, the socialists, say we should give them more money and more authority and let them run the whole show. That kind of thinking boggles the mind. One has to assume it is simply doctrinaire thinking based on a complete lack of understanding.

● (1840)

The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell), the spokesman for the New Democratic Party on energy matters, pooh-poohed the remarks made by my colleague, the hon. member for Calgary West, about the staff of Petro-Canada. I was watching Calgary television a couple of months ago when a television reporter asked a question of the graduating class of chemical engineers at the University of Calgary. There were 30 or 40 chemical engineers there. The television reporter asked the class to assume they had two job offers, one from Petro-Canada and one from Shell. The Petro-Canada offer was \$200 a month more than the one from Shell. He asked how many would accept the job from Petro-Canada. There was not one. He asked how many would accept the job offer from Shell, and the whole class said, "hurray". That is the attitude of Canada's brightest and sharpest in the community which knows Petro-Canada best. The energy critic for the New Democratic Party says Petro-Canada has outstanding personnel, and that he knows it. He knows from nothing.

Petro-Canada was touted by the NDP as being a possible price setter. Indeed, it is. It has the highest priced gasoline in the country. In every community in which Petro-Canada operates its prices are at a high level. Petro-Canada is a price leader everywhere. The Canadian Independent Petroleum Marketing Association is anxious to present evidence that