

Petroleum Administration Act

We, in British Columbia, want to negotiate a fair price for energy, one that will be fair to all Canadians. The provisions of the Petroleum Administration Act, the two sections which are under debate, should only be used when all else fails.

On this side of the House we do not dispute the need to implement that provision if—and let me emphasize the word “if”—there have been sufficient negotiations between the two levels of government. The Alberta energy minister has invited the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) to return to the negotiation table with the hope of securing agreement. Ignoring this invitation, the minister has arbitrarily opted to reject the invitation and to invoke sections 36 and 52 of this act. In my opinion, this is not the Canadian way of doing things and that is what I abhor about this whole ghastly mess.

The impact of the energy program put forth by the minister will not only affect the west, but it will have a grave and dangerous impact on the whole of the country. The Canadian consumer is being asked to contribute more money to the federal coffers than it was under the Crosbie budget of 1979. Within the next four years, Canadians will be paying over \$1 a gallon more for gas. By the end of 1983 the cost of energy will be between \$300 and \$600 a year more than it would have been under the Crosbie budget.

When one looks at the record of the present government, we see a government living in a dream world, over which it maintains complete supremacy. This government has refused to negotiate with the producing provinces for an oil agreement. Instead it is acting unilaterally. The same government also refused to debate the constitution, the most fundamental law of this land. It proposes to act unilaterally through its resolution. Since this government took office, it has totally ignored the people and the views of the people who put them there. Why do we have a government which does not listen to the people it governs?

I would like to take a few moments to reflect upon some of the expressed concerns of western Canadians. I feel it is important to this debate, especially when we are considering legislation which will have a major effect on all Canadians, today, and for generations to come.

The constituents of Prince George-Bulkley Valley have sent me to Ottawa for a very clear reason. As I said earlier, I am here as their representative and as their spokesman in Parliament. Therefore, I intend to express their concerns with regard to this debate. The issue relates directly to my constituents. It also relates to the continuing feeling of alienation and frustration in western Canada. Reports in the press, items on television and political leaders from all levels of government have all stated that the west is not understood. We hear that central Canada does not understand western Canada. Why do we hear about this alienation? My constituents in Prince George-Bulkley Valley want me to express the reasons. I intend to do so in this House, in this, the greatest institution known to Canadians.

Western Canadians are tired of subsidizing the price of fuel for industry in Quebec and Ontario. They are tired because

they already pay top dollars for central Canada's products. They are tired of living with the fact that the Government of Canada has set measures to protect the textile industry. The government makes it difficult for westerners to buy the less expensive goods from Pacific rim nations. Westerners are tired of the fact that the federal government has shown little presence in western Canada. The government has paid lip service to the needs of western Canadians with no solid effort to create continuity and fairness for the western economy. Westerners are tired of paying 1.6 times the western world price for consumer goods because of the barriers put up to protect industries established in Ontario and Quebec.

Western Canadians are not fooled by the federal government's propaganda of Canadianizing the oil industry. They know that the government will turn the notion of Canadianization into nationalization. Is the term “nationalization” not directly related to socialism? Of course, it is. The frustration of the west has led the government to encourage ministerial visits to western Canada by ministers of the Crown. They say they sense a concern that all is not well. Let me assure this House that all is not well.

The result of the last election proves that western Canada does not agree with Liberal philosophies. An editorial by the Vancouver Board of Trade states:

If the west is to be treated as something more than an obstinate child and if we are to be taken seriously as a mature member of this nation, we must speak up and state our case. Murmurings of western separation, conceived in resentment and nurtured by alienation, must not be allowed to grow.

To give this message, Mr. Speaker, is why the people of Prince George-Bulkley Valley have sent me here. Is it any wonder that western Canadians feel a sense of continued frustration when the federal government reaches into their pockets by forcing a massive federal tax grab on the industry that assures them of their future? The government has not only stifled our input into the constitution but has forbidden us the right to sit down and negotiate with our partners in confederation, namely, the provinces.

We want input into the future of our nation, and when we seek it, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) calls us hysterical. To give this message is why I have been sent here.

Western Canadians do not and will not accept the government's unilateral attempts to control our lives. I am at a loss to understand why the federal government has put Canada on a path toward a unitary state. It may not be the government's immediate intention, but its actions during this Thirty-second Parliament certainly lead me to believe that it does not hold the view that the provinces' rights should be upheld or that the provinces are, in fact, its equal partners in confederation.

We must ask ourselves the question: Are there other areas in which the government intends to act unilaterally? Its arbitrary decision to change unilaterally the most important law in the land without consultation with interest groups, notably native groups, women's groups, organized labour and even elected representatives of the people, leaves me with a sense of despair and frustration. Because the government intends to act unilaterally to attempt a take-over of one of the most important