

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The hon. member for Athabasca on a point of order.

Mr. Shields: I think we all realize at this time, Mr. Speaker, that there is a lot of pee in the NDP. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The hon. member for Western Arctic, not on the same point of order.

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): I think we have exhausted that particular point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the intervenors for the information they gave us, but I would like to continue with the discussion of Bill C-48.

The question before us tonight is Canadian ownership. I do not think there is a single member of this House who does not favour an increase in Canadian ownership in the Canadian oil and gas industry. It is pointless to have members on this side getting mad at members over there, saying they are trying to sell out to the Americans, or to have members on that side saying we are trying to sell out.

An hon. Member: No, you give it away.

Mr. Nickerson: The argument is on the process of Canadianization and how it should be implemented. My friends to the left, of course, want to nationalize everything in sight. The way members opposite want to do it is to use Petro-Canada, the chosen instrument of policy. The way we on this side would like to do it is through Canadian private investment. We do not want the government to own the oil and gas, the refineries and the distribution network in Canada. These industries should be owned by private individual Canadians.

An hon. Member: What party is Bill Davis in?

An hon. Member: Good old Suncor.

Mr. Nickerson: The difference in approach, Mr. Speaker, in how we are going to accomplish this—

An hon. Member: Nationalize the airlines.

An hon. Member: Do you want me to beat the tan off him?

Mr. Nickerson: Let's have a little bit of hush. This is a serious speech! If I might continue, Mr. Speaker. The difference in approach between the members over there and the good guys on this side is the same as the difference between the carrot and the stick approach. Over there, they want to use the big stick approach, use the big Liberal stick on the mean American oil companies. They want to use the big Liberal stick on Canadian companies also. They want to use that stick to take away 25 per cent of everything they find on Canada lands. They want to use that big Liberal club to beat the Canadian taxpayer. Just look at the Petrofina fiasco, the amount of money that cost Canadians and the Petro-Canada tax they must pay every time they buy a gallon of gasoline. That is the difference in approach between this side and that.

● (2100)

When I first read Motion No. 21, I was amazed at the moderation shown by the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre

Canada Oil and Gas Act

(Mr. Wilson). I got to thinking about it. I could see the reason why he presented this motion. It was because there could be no way the Liberal Party could not accept it. It was so reasonable and rational that any right-thinking person would jump at the opportunity to vote in favour of it. It does not purport to get rid of the concept of Crown ownership, or to put Petro-Canada out of business, but to use the concept of the Crown share when it becomes necessary.

We like the Canadian ownership rate of 50 per cent. It is a nice round figure. We would not argue whether it should be 50 per cent or 60 per cent. Over a period of time, we might even adopt the approach of the NDP of 50 per cent one year and maybe 55 per cent a few years later. However, the Crown share should only be used when necessary. When the Canadian ownership rate is less than 50 per cent, the Crown should pick up the balance to bring the Canadian ownership rate to 50 per cent. What could be more reasonable than that?

The proposal of the government would take away 25 per cent from anybody and everybody. It does not matter what the nationality of the particular operator is. The government will take the 25 per cent Crown share, whether it is necessary or not, for the purpose of pursuing a policy of Canadianization. They want to get the bureaucratic tentacles into every acre of oil and gas lands in Canada lands. That is what they are up to. Their intent is plain to see. They want a government say-so. They want somebody from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to say what can be done with each little parcel in Canada lands. It will not be very long before that principle is extended to the provinces of Canada, if the government gets its way.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): That is why they took property rights out of the Constitution.

Mr. Nickerson: That is correct. That is the basis behind that omission.

On a slightly different tack, I want to deal with what happens when the government has a share in an oilfield and the oil and gas rights to a particular parcel of land. This is not new. It exists in the north. It is in existence at the Norman Wells oilfield, approximately two thirds of which is owned by Imperial Oil and one third by our friendly federal government.

How does it operate? What advantages are there to the people who live in the area or, in fact, the rest of Canada in having one third federal ownership in that oilfield? I can think of no advantage. If you look at the efficiency with which that oilfield is operated, you find that it is less efficient because of federal government ownership. There is a disincentive to encouraging efficiency when certain costs can be allocated here and certain costs there so that items do not show up as profit on the government side. There is an inefficiency built into the system when the government takes over a sizeable proportion in that way.

Is it of any advantage to local people who would like to work in the oilfield or refinery? I do not think it makes one bit of difference. The same opportunities exist, regardless of whether