

Energy Supplies

the total supply of energy available for Canadians since 1974. The federal government's inability to solve the tax problem which drove the drills and oil rigs out of Alberta and the west reduced the total supply of energy that would be available to Canadians at the present time.

On the basis of supply policy its action was counterproductive. However, where the government stands even more indicted is that it did nothing to deal with the energy problems of Atlantic Canada, an area which depends on offshore oil.

Once the OPEC cartel was formed everyone knew that dependence on offshore oil was totally inadequate. And yet, we did not store oil when we could have. Nothing was done to develop a transportation system to carry oil and gas to Atlantic Canada. We have a Department of Regional Economic Expansion to help slow growth areas. However, at the same time the government did nothing to put in place an energy program to protect the long-term interests of the people of that region.

● (2200)

How incredible it is that someone living in Charlottetown has to pay \$60 when someone in St. Catharines pays \$28 for the same amount of electricity. How incredible it is that we would allow that kind of situation to develop. How incredible it is that the government would not know, after disruption in world markets, that its first priority had to be to get energy into Atlantic Canada.

The other day the minister commented that we are a net importer of oil. Of course we are at the present time. The government's conservation program has been a total failure, but the minister forgets that there are many substitutions for oil. We were talking about 80 per cent of the electricity in Atlantic Canada being fuelled by oil. Did the minister never hear of natural gas? Given the fact that we have a surplus of natural gas, how could the government be so neglectful that it did not find some way to get natural gas to Atlantic Canada? How could it be so neglectful when it knew, or ought to have known, that its foreign sources of supply of oil were not likely to be available in the future? Clearly this is a government which has neglected the fundamental responsibility of any government, to look after the interests of its citizens.

This government stands indicted for the way it has managed the economy, for racking up a deficit and for causing inflation. It stands indicted for creating alienation across the country. It stands indicted for being unable to handle the separatism problem in the province of Quebec. It stands really indicted for the way it has handled energy policy and for its inability to provide for all Canadians, regardless of where they live, with an equal opportunity to get the energy they should have in a country as rich in energy as is this nation. For some reason or other this government does not seem to understand the functions of leadership and government. Those functions are to provide a framework within which citizens can live. This government has been so wrapped up in expanding its own power goals and in developing things like Petro-Canada that it has missed the objective any energy policy should have.

[Mr. Gillies.]

In the few moments I have left I would like to point out that the government has been indicted in many areas, but the thing that will cause the electors to convict it in an election which must be called soon—because we cannot stand the mismanagement we have had much longer—will be the government's absolute failure in energy policy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about this bill, but I will call it ten o'clock.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

PENITENTIARIES—OPTIMUM NUMBER OF PERSONS TO BE HOUSED IN INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, on February 12 I directed some questions to the Solicitor General (Mr. Blais) with respect to the announced changes in the Canadian Penitentiary Service construction program. Although the announcement referred to a national program, I wish to deal with it as it relates to my constituency of Fraser Valley East. The first question I addressed to the minister on February 12 as it is reported in *Hansard* at page 3107 was the following:

In view of his recent statement regarding penitentiary services, will the minister advise the House whether he has rejected the submission of the subcommittee on the penitentiary service that institutions housing a maximum of 200 persons would be the most efficient and desirable in future planning?

The minister's response was as follows:

—I made a statement in Kamloops, I believe in the second week of December—if the hon. gentleman is not aware of it, I will send him a copy—in which I indicated what the present policy was in terms of penitentiary construction.

In checking the statement alluded to I found that the minister rejected the submission of the subcommittee on penitentiaries which suggested that penal institutions should be limited in size to house a population of 220 to 250 inmates. The feeling of frustration and concern expressed by members of the committee recently over the government's attitude to their work and report is understandable in the light of the attitude taken by the minister in that instance.

● (2205)

My second question on February 12 was:

Mr. Speaker, will the minister report to the House on the results of his meeting with the mayors of central and upper Fraser Valley a week ago when the announced changes as they relate to penal institutions in that area were discussed?