

There are jobs to be created in the renewable resource sector. There is an opportunity to create jobs in the renewable energy sector of Canada. But the Government has chosen to cut back. That was the point I was making. I do not mind the Government looking after its friends in Bill C-8, but it must think of the consumers, the ordinary Canadians. The Government has allowed the oil companies to have breaks, but at the same time the cost of energy has risen 2.9 per cent since the beginning of October. In many parts of Canada people have to heat their homes earlier and longer, and they must drive greater distances to their workplace, because they do not have the kind of urban transportation which we enjoy in the city of Sudbury and in other large cities. We are allowing the price of oil to increase to the world price, but at the same time we are not demanding the world price for natural gas. The Government must be even-handed in the way it deals with its friends in the oil patch. It does not deal with ordinary Canadians in the same fashion it deals with its friends in the oil patch.

[Translation]

Mr. Desrosiers: Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez). He said earlier that the Progressive Conservative Party was taking care of its friends. He may recall that it was the Progressive Conservative Party that not long ago appointed a Member of his own Party as ambassador. I might also remind him that the Progressive Conservative Party is there to help the friends of all parties in Canada.

[English]

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, if the Government is looking for the odd opposition Member to appoint to a position so that thereafter it can, with great pomposity, appoint every Tory to every board and commission, then it is on the right track, because it is doing that. However, the Government should not expect me to thank it for appointing New Democrats to positions. I want to see what it will do for ordinary Canadians. That is how the Government will be judged.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The time for questions and comments has expired.

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a few brief remarks on Bill C-8 which is before the House today. I would like to compliment the Minister of State for Finance (Mrs. McDougall). In my opinion, and in the opinion of my colleagues, she has been doing an excellent job. I would suspect that in their heart of hearts, Hon. Members opposite would agree with me.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nickerson: A number of Bills have come forward which are advantageous to all Canadians. The Bills will furnish tax relief and do all sorts of good things on behalf of the Government of Canada.

Bill C-8 has been in the works for some time. Most of it came to us as a legacy from the previous Government. It had

Petroleum and Gas Revenue Tax Act

to be put forward because there were so many problems in the PGRT as it existed. I am pleased that there has been an increase from \$250,000 to \$500,000 for the credit which is available to small producers. That measure should help the small companies who are having such a hard time in the West. They were hit hard by the Liberal national energy policy. The Government is making changes which will remove some of the ill effects of the ill-conceived Liberal policy of the past.

The enhanced recovery deduction will help to get tertiary oil production moving again in western Canada. It will help with projects such as the tar sands in northern Alberta. Again, we are trying to turn around the bad effects of the national energy policy.

There is one other point to which I would like to refer in the Bill, that is, the facility which will be made available for the transfer of unused exploration and development expense tax credits on the amalgamation or winding-up of a corporation which is engaged in the energy business. We all know that a number of small oil companies had their backs up against the wall and were forced into bankruptcy by Liberal policy. All that was worth anything to them were tax losses. I am pleased to see this provision in the Bill. It will ensure that the tax credits will not remain completely unused. They will not expire, and they can be used by a successor corporation. That will be an advantage—as the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) indicated—to our friends. We do have friends in the oil industry on this side of the House. Our friends are the people who drill oil wells and the people who draw seismic lines. They are the friends of my Party. They ought to be the friends of the NDP, but apparently the NDP has no sympathy for the people who are engaged in the drilling of oil wells or anything else which goes on in the oil and gas business.

I would like to say a few words about the over-all approach of the Bill. What is required is not a fine-tuning of the existing legislation, but an over-all examination of the tax laws which affect oil and gas. This is only an interim measure. A lot of things must be done to improve the tax royalty situation on oil and gas.

We could look at the NEP. What did that program really try to do? First of all, the Liberal Government of that day wanted to control the energy business in Canada. Legitimately, under the Constitution, it is primarily a provincial responsibility. However, the Liberal Government was not satisfied with that. It wanted to grab the whole thing and put on a lot of federal controls, destroying much of the industry in the process. It was a tax grab. There has never been a tax grab like it in the history of Canada. What the Liberal Government wanted to do was to extract from the energy industry and energy consumers \$50 billion in five years. That was its projected plan to finance some of the ill-conceived schemes which it had going, and which still have to be paid for, unfortunately. That idea did not work out because oil prices did not escalate at the rate which was initially forecast.