

*Canada Oil and Gas Act*

first responsibility of this minister is to develop a co-operative plan. To date he has been an abject failure in that regard.

I want development in the offshore the very same as is happening on land, that we drill for oil and gas, develop hydroelectric projects and so on. That is what I want to see happen. However, this bill will bring about the opposite. Just as we have seen the postponement of projects or the fact that projects are more difficult to bring on stream, I fear the same will happen offshore.

Some members might be surprised that one who lives in the longitudinal centre of Canada should speak on this bill dealing with an offshore project. The reasons are the following. Some provinces at the moment are defined as have-nots. I find that definition difficult to understand because they might have cultural or social advantages which other regions do not have. However, speaking in economic terms, I want those provinces to have an economic activity which will have growth and which will be based on their natural advantages. That is what I want to see happen.

If the earned income of the average citizen in Newfoundland rises, that not only benefits the citizens of that region, it benefits the entire country.

There is a philosophy which is becoming part of the Canadian psyche. It is believed that if people in a certain region have a better income, somehow the country does not benefit; however, when an Albertan progresses, Canada benefits or when a Newfoundlander progresses, Canada benefits. What is this philosophy that makes us fear growth in a given region?

When income is earned, we spend that income. We do not spend it narrowly in the region in which it is earned. That income is spent across the country. The country benefits through growth. I cannot understand a government which believes we have to restrict growth because one area might get ahead of another and that is not good for Canada. I need not say any more about that because it is so obvious.

There is another point I want to make regarding this motion. When the three prairie provinces entered confederation, they were regarded as not being competent to control their own resources. In fact, the province of Manitoba has been longer in confederation without owning its resources than it has been in confederation while owning them. It is a have not province.

The provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan entered in 1905 and received their resources in 1930. I do not want to be negative toward the Liberal members. A lot of them are my friends and I know they hold their views as sincerely as I do. However, I had a discussion with a former member of this House, a predecessor of mine in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. We were discussing northern Canada. He said to me that the government made a mistake when it gave the prairies their resources in 1930 because now they are holding the rest of the country up for ransom. He said the government will not allow it to happen again in the north.

That philosophy is detrimental to this country. The prairie regions finally acquired ownership of their resources in 1930 when an amendment was made to the British North America Act. That is significant. If you look at Canadian history, there is a view that the prairie region was helped by other parts of the country during the depression. That is a historical fact. However, why did the prairie regions need that help? Might it be the case that if they had their own resources and made some money from those resources, they might have been in a different situation in the thirties? History does not record that. If history does not record that, how can it record that Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or British Columbia in the west could not have the growth which would, first of all, take their provincial averages up to a higher level and then benefit the whole country? One of the reasons that the prairies had difficulty during the depression, I submit to you, was that they did not have control of their resources. The same situation exists on the offshore today. It is a parallel. Why should the Atlantic provinces not have that control?

• (1750)

I found it interesting to read in the documents on federal-provincial relations that the province which has been most definitive and vocal over the years in terms of defending provincial rights has been the province of Ontario. The reason Ontario, its premiers and its government have been so vocal is that they knew that as mineral resources were developed in that province, if ownership and control were removed, in spite of its industrial base it would be in trouble.

What the hon. member for St. John's East is asking for is ownership and control. He mentioned the socioeconomic reasons. It is interesting that the very thinking the hon. member for St. John's East put before the House today dominated the federal government when it passed the Northern Pipeline Agency Act. Before that pipeline could be built, the government put in socioeconomic conditions. I remember during the time of our government when I had the responsibility, and when I talked to the present minister, I knew these things had to be put in place before we could start building the pipeline. What is different in that situation from the one that is now being proposed?

There is another concern I have, one which was mentioned by the hon. member for St. John's East. Magnanimously, he has not confined his amendment to Newfoundland, the maritime region or British Columbia. He has drafted his amendment in such a way that other regions which have not even come into consideration would also be included. Let me give you just one example. Manitoba and Ontario border on Hudson Bay. The so-called inland ocean exists there, but who owns the offshore resources there? Is Manitoba to have no claim to the mineral wealth that might lie under the waters of Hudson Bay? These are the questions that are before the courts. These are the questions on development that should be answered. I cannot accept a unilateral bill such as the one before me which says that for all times this has now been