

Small Atlantic firms can participate in offshore resource and onshore support activities both individually and through joint ventures. The federal government will strongly support Canadian firms based in the Atlantic provinces as they move to grasp opportunities and create additional jobs.

Through Petro-Canada, the petroleum incentives program and other Canadianization provisions of the National Energy Program, Canadians will be major partners in all offshore development.

The opportunity for Canadians to play a greater role in the development of our own petroleum industry is also an opportunity for foreign-owned firms to accelerate their own efforts through co-operative ventures.

As I have mentioned, multinational corporations are in good position to benefit from this activity as a result of the 25 per cent cash incentive grant available to all explorers and their strong land positions in the frontier. Farm-ins and other co-operative arrangements will further increase Canadian participation.

To achieve our 1990 goal of oil self-sufficiency and security and to maintain that position in the years ahead, an enormous and continuing capital investment in energy projects will be required. It is the intention of our energy program to involve Canadians fully in the petroleum game for the first time in our history. The bulk of the necessary investment in conventional oil and gas will be generated in Canada, as before, but with a better balance of ownership. Some megaprojects, such as those in the oil sands, will no doubt require additional investment from outside Canada. Canada will continue to welcome such investments. The returns will be generous.

Under our new energy program there will be ample growth and action for everyone during the next decade and well beyond. Investors are not oblivious to the kind of long term, fundamental strengths I have mentioned. When the chips are down, the industry's ability to replace and to expand its production over the longer haul is what really counts. That opportunity certainly exists in Canada.

These opportunities, however, will be undertaken with the greatest concern for the people who live in the Canada lands and the frontier environment. The National Energy Program and Bill C-48 have both illustrated through their provisions understanding and compassion for the rights of the native people of the Canada lands. Nothing in the act abrogates or derogates from any title, right or claim that the aboriginal people may have had prior to the coming into force of this act. The native peoples have the assurance of the government that this bill will not prejudice the fair resolution of land claims.

If there are those who would question the government's good faith with respect to land claim negotiations, let them consider the recent decision on the Norman Wells pipeline and the Petro-Canada agreement. Construction of the pipeline extension and exploration activities were delayed two years to allow for issues related to land claims to be resolved through negotiation. Native peoples should enjoy the benefit but bear fewer of the costs of northern resource development. Bill C-48

Canada Oil and Gas Act

ensures this and more. It ensures that northerners' interests are protected and that people living in the north have the opportunity to play a more meaningful role in these activities, not only in terms of manpower but also in important social, economic, political and environmental consultative processes.

Bill C-48 is not an environmental bill, but it goes to great length to augment existing environmental legislation and to provide additional security for the fragile environment of the Canada lands. Although the emphasis of the new regime is on the early assessment of Canada's oil and gas potential on these lands, it will not be done at the expense of the environment of the north or, for example, offshore fisheries. There are provisions for the environmental revolving fund to cover the costs of regional studies relating to industrial activities. There are also a number of optional provisions that assist in the supervision and control of oil and gas activities and land management. These take the form of amendments to the Oil and Gas Production and Conservation Act of 1970. They deal with such matters as pollution prevention requirements, the reporting of oil spills, and oil spill liability requirements, including the requirement for absolute liability on the part of operators and compensation for damage caused by oil field debris jettisoned overboard or left near wells on the sea floor. They establish new authorities to prevent oil and gas spills, to implement remedial measures, to hold operators financially liable for actions that cause spills, to allow responsible authorities to intervene in the remote event of a spill and, at the operator's cost, to hold inquiries regarding spills, debris and accidents, and to allow for punishment for offences. Such provisions and others will influence the companies' operational behaviour. Moreover, they will induce further research by industry as well as government into preventive techniques and equipment and the development of improved oil spill countermeasures.

There are a number of other provisions in Bill C-48 governing environmental matters in Canada's northern and offshore areas. For example, there is a provision dealing with the early release of environmental information and another to permit remedial orders for environmental reasons. Clearly, the bill goes to great lengths to ensure the safety of our precious environment in the north and offshore.

As I said at the beginning, this is an historic occasion for this House. Throughout the past year we have listened carefully to what both supporters and critics of the National Energy Program have said about it. We made changes when there were compelling reasons for doing so. But when we knew we were right, we held firm to our position. In the weeks and months ahead there will no doubt be more listening, more discussions, more fine tuning of the program. But the basic program is in place; it is now working and the Government of Canada is getting on with the job of wisely managing Canada's energy resources.