

Exploration and Development

The resource communities of this country need a long-term commitment. They need long-term commitments from industry, from the labour force. Most importantly, to set the ground rules, they need to have some long-term planning and commitments from the Government that when a program is in place for a specific period that it should at least last for that long so that we all know the ground rules and begin to work to change our resource communities and our resource industries from the boom-and-bust cycle into long-term, stable growth so that we and succeeding generations can count on an increasing share of the wealth that this country can produce.

• (1650)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On questions or comments the Hon. Member for Edmonton East.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): British Columbia enjoys a substantial natural gas industry. Certainly, New Democrats in British Columbia know this because it was the very far-sighted administration of the Hon. Member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca (Mr. Barrett) who pioneered the creation of the marketing agency that the New Democratic Government in British Columbia put in place to handle that province's natural gas: collecting the gas from the producers in that province, and paying the small independent producers the best returns they ever had for natural gas in that province, marketing it, and pocketing a great deal of the rent earned thereby for the people of British Columbia.

There is still a substantial natural gas industry in British Columbia. It is still characterized by a fairly large number of independent Canadian firms.

I was wondering if my hon. friend might offer some speculation as to what the impact of this Bill could prove to be on those natural gas firms operating in his province that have benefited so handsomely from legislation put in place by a previous New Democratic provincial Government?

Mr. Kristiansen: If I were a Member from northeastern British Columbia, I would be in a much better position to answer the question.

As I stated earlier that while there are similarities between the oil and gas exploration sector and those within the mining industry, I am not directly familiar

enough with the experiences to be able to relate back one or two lifetimes ago, in political terms, to be able to give a clear and concise answer to the question posed by my hon. colleague.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): Speculate.

Mr. Kristiansen: I hesitate to speculate. I wish the Hon. Member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca (Mr. Barrett) was present. The legislation and the change in the marketing mechanisms that were brought in at that time did assist the industry within my own Province of British Columbia. I only wish that in the not too distant future we may see those types of initiatives taken again by a Government of a similar bent.

In responding to my hon. colleague, one thing I can be very clear on is that, unlike the Government that simply preaches being businesslike and talks about consulting with all sections of society before precipitating actions, I know that myself and my colleagues whether provincially in British Columbia or federally here are committed to consultation with all sections of the Canadian community, including all segments of the business and industrial community, to ensure that even though we may disagree on some particular points, we do understand the importance of stability and establishing ground rules that we can count on for a foreseeable period and thus plan both our private and our public activities in such a manner as to ensure the maximum benefit for the greatest number of Canadians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Edmonton East on a question or a comment.

Mr. Harvey (Edmonton East): The principal aspect of this Bill is that it will result in a withdrawal of federal government money from an area of the energy industry characterized, at least in Alberta, by a large number of small independent Canadian firms. One of the places in which the federal Government is continuing to promise at least the investment of substantial sums of money, certainly sums far greater than is accounted for by this premature cancellation of CEDIP, is in the proposed Vancouver Island natural gas pipeline. It was promised again during the last federal election.

Does the Hon. Member accord any greater credibility to the promise that was made during this federal election than he does now to the promise made during the prior federal election by the Government, or indeed at any of the provincial elections by the current Social Credit