

Energy

crude oil price if it is expected to take the major investment risks required to bring the tar sands into production. Congratulations are due to the oil industry which, fortunately for Canada, has been planning ahead diligently without knowing the specifics of the business environment in which its major development investments will be made. It is in this area that the government has failed to gain the confidence of the industry. The government, and particularly the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie), are to be severely castigated for their lack of foresight and their inability to make decisions regarding how the proper development of energy supplies should proceed. How can we as a nation achieve our goal of self sufficiency if these major projects do not know the long term business circumstances? How can they be encouraged?

I was rather amused at the minister's statement that these projects were all about to begin, when only two or three days ago he said in this chamber that he has not as yet reached any kind of agreement with the tar sands industry and Shell Oil so that they would know under what conditions their plants are to be constructed, and under what circumstances they might be able to predict their financial returns and their economic picture. That is unknown still today.

● (1652)

The minister runs around trumpeting the onset of the third tar sands project, knowing full well that he is responsible for the inordinate delays which have been happening in the construction of this plant. I am rather surprised he did not take the opportunity to tell us today why he is dragging his feet on this matter. I am sure he must accept the fact that development should be more rapid. I hope the minister will be serious because he has not been so far, particularly from the point of view of his policies not being matched to his words. He says one thing in this chamber about how he wants to see the developments take place, but he certainly does not follow up his statements with any kind of policies or long-term commitments. As a result of that we are in a situation where, by 1990, we will be importing 58 per cent of our total energy needs. That is a rather shameful performance on the part of the minister. He has nothing at all to smile about when he talks about his policies—or lack of them—as far as tar sands development is concerned.

As a result of a lot of foot dragging by the minister, Shell Oil is not starting its construction.

Farther south of Fort McMurray near Cold Lake, Imperial Oil has announced its proposed project, which is the first commercial in situ tar sands recovery project. This project is expected to cost in excess of \$4 billion, and is pioneering new technology. The company has been experimenting with this production technology for nearly 14 years. They have said so in their television advertising. I think this television advertising has been important. It has let the public know that in spite of the lack of interest of this particular administration, and under adverse circumstances, the entrepreneurial skills of oil companies have indeed continued, with the ever-optimistic hope that

[Mr. Yewchuk.]

the government would be replaced. Perhaps even some minister of the government could be appointed, if the government is not replaced, who would be more amenable to accepting his responsibility in terms of long-term tar sands development policy.

I can say that the industry has had no reason for confidence in this particular government's policies. As a result of that, industry is not sure that the kind of development will take place that they want.

Imperial, Shell, and other projects will provide more jobs, as well as an industrial stimulus across Canada. The industrial ripple effect will also be felt in all parts of the country and will give long-term stimulus to the economy as a whole. I am sure we all agree that is badly needed. I recognize that these projects have a long-lead time and their benefits will not be felt until the early 1980's, but this is the type of entrepreneurship we need in this country, which should be encouraged every day. The present government has for too long denied industries in Canada a clear and stable industrial business climate which would encourage industrial development.

Bill C-19 itself has been a long time coming. I was amused that the minister was able to say today with a straight face how anxious he was to get this bill through. I would ask him how long it took that bill in gestation. I would suggest that it was longer than the gestation period of an elephant, which is a long time. Now, all of a sudden, he is in a great rush to get it through. I am not saying, Mr. Speaker, that we do not agree it should be put through in a hurry, but I am saying that he should have given the matter a little forethought a long time ago, and the bill would have been passed by now.

As it is, the bill is before the House right now. It has to be considered before passage, and it is now only two or three months before the Syncrude project is going on-stream. This bill should have been in place before that project even began construction. That reflects quite clearly the foot dragging attitudes of this minister and the lack of incentive that his foot dragging has created as far as the other projects are concerned.

We have the opportunity in Canada to become self-reliant in energy and thus self-sufficient. We also have the opportunity to generate national wealth by encouraging the export of surplus energy supplies as they are made available. The petroleum industry has repeatedly shown that it has the drive and initiative to develop Canada's petroleum resources. But to do so it needs a national government with a stable economic policy to stimulate the long-term investment and project planning which is necessary. Everybody accepts that a stable economic policy is necessary for massive projects such as these.

Industry must have confidence that it will be repaid, that its efforts will not be thwarted, either by intergovernmental bickering, which this minister has been engaging in widely, or by changing the rules of the game, which this minister and his predecessors have been doing.

To sum, up industry and potential investors in the petroleum industry need assurance that government policies will be stable