

*National Energy Program*

**Mr. Clark:** When is your next retreat, Marc?

**Mr. Lalonde:** —to provide Canadians with greater opportunities for their oil and gas industry, to ensure a fair deal between producers and consumers and to achieve energy security for all Canadians is there and will remain unchanged.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Madam Speaker, we have just seen the most shameless defence of the worst economic disaster that this country has seen—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Wilson:** —probably in our history.

**Some hon. Members:** Right on!

**Mr. Wilson:** This major reversal is probably the greatest reversal that we have seen, with one exception, that being the time on December 18 when we stood here and watched the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) step back and take in all his dirty laundry on the budget. But there is still more to come on that, and we cannot wait for the next one.

**Mr. Ouellet:** Which multinational do you represent when you are speaking like this?

**Mr. Wilson:** Madam Speaker, this National Energy Program has been the greatest disaster that we have seen. We have seen 40 per cent of the rigs leave the country. We have seen 15,000 jobs lost. We have seen the Alsands project killed and the Cold Lake project killed, and the minister has waited 18 months to do something about this disaster.

The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) have used the Canadian economy as an experimental laboratory for their own selfish socialist policies.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wilson:** It has been a disaster and all Canadians are suffering for it, suffering through high gas prices, through high interest rates, through loss of employment and through greater reliance on unstable sources of oil in the Middle East. First the Minister of Finance and now the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources have eaten a large plate of crow. The problems were addressed by the minister tonight. Make no mistake about that. These problems were caused, first and foremost, by the energy policy which he announced in October of 1980. This misguided, misunderstood policy, the ivory tower view that he thrust upon all Canadians on that night, has damaged the most promising industry that we have in our country. At that time it was a source of strength for our economy.

**Mr. Gustafson:** It was booming.

**Mr. Wilson:** It was the one source of strength which could have carried us through the recession that we are in today. But now this industry is struggling for survival. I repeat, the minister has finally realized, after 18 months of dithering, wondering what he could do to pull himself out of the muck,

wondering how he could get this industry partly back on the rails again, recognizing that there was a disaster which had to be addressed, the rigs having left the country, the Cold Lake and Alsands projects having failed, that the exploration which was running at a rate of increase of 31 per cent per annum has now, since October, 1980, been reduced by 2 per cent per annum. That is the effect that his policy has had on the industry in this country.

**Mr. Clark:** Make him stay!

**Mr. Wilson:** But let us also look at what he has done tonight.

**Miss MacDonald:** He has just left the House.

**Mr. Wilson:** The minister has left the House, I see.

**Mr. Ouellet:** He will be back, do not worry, but with what you are saying, he could go away.

**Mr. Wilson:** The minister has put together a patchwork quilt in trying to understand the impact of this on the industry. He is only tinkering with the problems brought about in October of 1980. He must understand that he cannot put Humpty Dumpty together again just by this fragmented policy approach. The loss of confidence in the industry, the lack of trust in government and the lack of credibility of the government in the eyes of many people in the oil and gas industry will take years to regain.

I should draw Your Honour's attention to the fact that in 1974-75, the last time we had this sort of disaster in the oil and gas industry, it took three years to recover, but that was when the oil rigs which had left the country amounted to only about 10 per cent, compared with 40 per cent this time. No one believes the statistics used by the minister tonight. He is well known to be a master at twisting numbers to try to tell a story, but people who know the story never believed and never will believe it. This approach will not regain the confidence in that industry that we must have if we are to recover.

We should also recognize that the degree of intervention, regulation, big lever-pulling by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources stays. Nothing has changed to remedy that major problem which has caused those in the industry to back off and to move their rigs and their people south.

The third point I should like to make concerning the program announced tonight, the update, is that the minister has said that this \$2 billion program will save the industry. He takes substantial credit for it, and he says that it is all his doing and that he is paying for it. He said that the consumers will not pay a nickel for it. He has never got it through his head that the consumer pays for everything. Directly, in this program, the consumer will be paying 30 per cent or \$600 million of the total program of \$2.1 billion. That is the sort of thing that he has laid on the consumer tonight. He has ignored the fact that gasoline prices in Canada are at 10 cents to 20