

Canada Oil and Gas Act

claim of Newfoundland that they came into Confederation bringing title to their offshore resources. We have the Nova Scotia claim, as documented by the charter of William Alexander in 1621, giving that province title to all lands as far out as 120 miles off the coastline. In the case of British Columbia we have a Supreme Court decision, at least in so far as the inshore waters from headland to headland are concerned, which says the resources beneath those waters belong to the province of British Columbia, not to Canada as a whole. That could be interpreted as a rather selfish statement—

An hon. Member: Oh, no.

Mr. Siddon:—but it is not because it has been the history of this country that all those regions which have prospered and developed with the benefit of their resources have in fact contributed to the national cause and the strengthening of this nation in a very generous fashion. That will continue, Mr. Speaker.

However, let us look for a moment at the leaked cabinet document respecting the first ministers' conference last September. Let us consider what it had to say about this question. The document recognized that all ten premiers felt the offshore areas within the immediate vicinity of provincial boundaries should belong to the provinces. The federal government put forward a proposal at that time agreeing to perhaps a 100 per cent "provincial-type" revenue sharing on those resources. Furthermore, there was an agreement or proposal that:

—bilateral joint bodies would be responsible for over-all management—

of these resources. Reading from page 18 of that document, Mr. Speaker, it is plain that the government viewed it as being essential that:

—if there is to be any possibility of reaching agreement with the coastal provinces, that the federal proposal be modified to give greater recognition to provincial desires for a significant voice in managing the offshore.

This present initiative, Mr. Speaker, as reflected in Bill C-48, flies completely in the face of that advice which the government received last September in advance of the first ministers' conference. It flies completely in the face of the Supreme Court initiatives, it flies completely in the face of all legal precedents. Therefore, I contend that what we see here is a dog-in-the-manger attitude on the part of the federal government which wants to push this legislation forward now unilaterally and without granting any role for the coastal provinces, contrary to their own undertakings last September. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this is a cheap, childish and greedy way for the federal government to deal with the provinces. Instead of negotiating in good faith, it has chosen to mount an attack on the provinces. As in the constitutional initiative, they mount an attack as a smokescreen to cover up their own foul smelling plots.

The federal government chooses to deny the far-flung regions of Canada a resource base which they so desperately need to rise above colonial status, to rise above welfare dependency and poverty. In putting Bill C-48 forward in this way, the government has shown little maturity—in fact, none; no wisdom, and no compassion in their treatment of the coastal

regions which might one day benefit from Canada lands resources. They have chosen instead the meat axe approach last summer of coming out sounding good and then coming along to chop, chop, chop, without regard for the views of the duly elected governments in those regions.

What about the future of the Atlantic region, Mr. Speaker? I was looking through some data yesterday in respect of the economic development of the four Atlantic provinces in particular. It is interesting to reflect on this data's significance. The graph I display here shows the per capita income from all revenue sources among the various provinces. It shows the Atlantic provinces are 33 per cent below the average per capita income enjoyed by Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan. Of course, at the present time Alberta's income is considerably higher. However, it seems to me to be a ploy of the federal government to equalize the bars on this graph so that the per capita income in every province is identical. I think if that should happen, it would be a sorry day for Canada because it would destroy mobility, the quest for opportunity in this country; in fact it would be completely contrary to the history of the first 100 years of Canada when Ontario and Quebec regard massive benefits from confederation.

May I call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At six o'clock, the House took recess.

[English]

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Siddon: Mr. Speaker, I will not be long in concluding my remarks on motion No. 3, which seeks to amend Bill C-48. Before the dinner hour I commented on the future of the four Atlantic provinces which would be affected by the amendment put forward by the hon. member for St. John's East. I referred to a graph which displays the income per capita from all revenue sources. It shows the four Atlantic provinces in recent times receiving approximately two-thirds of the national average revenue per capita. Do the Atlantic provinces have to consider forever being on the dole or dependent on the good graces of the federal government to enjoy prosperity?

In the context of Bill C-48 and the particular amendment before the House, the questions we are asking are: Will the Atlantic region ever have an opportunity to grow and prosper? What say will their provincial governments have, the governments of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, in the development of their offshore resources? Will Bill C-48 enable those regions to become self-sufficient in oil and gas, or will this legislation hinder such development to the detriment of the Atlantic region, as is happening most demonstrably in western Canada at the