

Summer Recess

● (1600)

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The concern expressed by the Chair relates to the substantive nature of the amendment, and I will reserve judgment. Meanwhile we will recognize speakers in the debate.

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, I have been able to listen to this debate, which in reality began on Friday, continued today, and may possibly extend over most of the week, on what I think is an extremely important subject. I could not help contrasting the contribution to the debate of the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) with that of the leader of the socialist party. While I did not agree, naturally, with everything the Leader of the Opposition had to say, I did find myself moved and impressed by the sensitivity with which he discussed this problem. He spoke eloquently about the reception he received in Quebec during the referendum. I, too, was pleased at the reception paid to the right hon. member, if only because of the determination and skill with which he has mastered the other official language of this country. I think it is no secret that the Leader of the Opposition is welcome in any riding in any part of that beautiful province.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke also of the sensitivity of the unique problems of Alberta, implying, I suppose, that we in the east should understand a little more some of the problems and economic problems of Alberta. It is perhaps time that we in the east understood that not everybody in the province of Alberta is a millionaire or near millionaire, that there are people in Alberta who are very dependent on the prosperity of this country for their own economic survival, and that everybody in Alberta is not necessarily linked to the gas and oil industry.

What I got out of the message of the Leader of the Opposition is that if there are any regional considerations being advanced here by hon. members from Alberta, they are being advanced positively, logically, and in the spirit which I think has to prevail in this country over the next ten or 20 years if we are going to mend fences, so to speak, and bring this country closer together rather than farther apart. I think the Leader of the Opposition stressed that energy and the way it is handled in the next ten or 20 years can be a positive force but that it can be an equally divisive force and that at this present moment we need to be a little more considerate, tolerant, and understanding of regional problems.

Perhaps it is in that vein that I approach the whole issue of the pre-build pipeline and what it means to segments of the economy of Alberta. I am thinking particularly of people in the natural gas industry. I know a little bit about this in the sense that I have been in the riding of the Leader of the Opposition, I have been to Blairmore, I have entered the Coleman collieries and I have seen the coal industry, their horizontal shafts, and people working extremely hard for their livelihood. I know the frustrations of people in the natural gas industry, the independent producers of natural gas who sit

with thousands—not hundreds—of natural gas wells capped because there is no market or, more properly put, no access to the markets which are there. We would not be discussing this at the moment if the National Energy Board had not clearly indicated that there is a surplus of natural gas at this moment, and a market ready.

Mr. Orlikow: How many times are they wrong?

Mr. Mackasey: I do not want to get into an argument with the hon. doctrinaire socialist on the front bench, who constantly interrupts with the same diatribe each and every time somebody wants to approach a debate on a different plane.

If it is a matter of trading insults with the hon. gentleman, I can do it, because if we carry his logic to a conclusion, nothing which is not renewable should be exported from this country until sometime in the twenty-second century. That is true of copper, silver, gold, iron and coal. It is equally true of the 22 million barrels of crude oil which the province of Saskatchewan exports every year. We do not hear a word in the debate about the 22 million barrels of crude oil which are exported from Saskatchewan. Sixty thousand barrels are exported daily. I happen to agree with the policy. I think it is logical. I think that the province of Saskatchewan has acted wisely and with restraint, but the fact still remains that to some hon. members in that party there is no valid excuse for selling one barrel of crude oil today.

It is obvious and inevitable that ten, 20, 50 or 100 years from now, if we still need crude oil or gas, its value will be increased that much more. The false logic of all the arguments on Friday and today, including that of the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) today, is based on the false premise that because it can be demonstrated that natural gas and crude oil or energy of any type will have a greater monetary value ten, 20, 40 or 50 years from now, we should wait for 50 years. The Leader of the NDP does not tell the independent producer of natural gas what the people in this business should be doing in the meantime with their inventories or their supplies. It should be sold if it can be clearly demonstrated that in selling it the national interest of this country is not affected.

Mr. McDermid: Tell that to your energy minister. Read Lalonde's speech of December 6.

Mr. Mackasey: The problem with the New Democrats is that everything must be discussed and weighed on the basis of their doctrinaire approach that private enterprise has no place in our society, that multinational corporations—or indeed any corporation of any size—should not exist and that everything should be state-owned, including all forms of energy, all retail outlets and every service station on every corner. It is extremely difficult to debate with people who begin from that premise. In his speech the Leader of the New Democratic Party had to admit that there will be some negative effects on steel workers, but he rationalized that away. He said that there will not be too many. Let him tell that to the steelworkers in Lincoln. Let him say to the steelworkers of Hamilton that there will not be