

Government Orders

jobs by using natural gas and extending our options in markets.

Currently we are nationally tied in with selling natural gas exclusively into the United States. There is no money available because of these caps to start experimenting with other possibilities.

The one program I want to suggest as a job creation program and a revenue-flowing instrument for the federal government is the sale of liquefied natural gas offshore into the Asian market. Since this idea was proposed with provincial-federal co-operation back in the early 1970s, the major opposition to it was the fact there were limited reserves of natural gas. Currently and happily, there is a great confirmed reserve of natural gas in this country.

If we eliminated the capping and gave some options in this regard to the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia and perhaps the territories, we could begin to sign offshore contracts for liquefied natural gas to be carried in Canadian ships manufactured in Canadian shipyards. Those markets could be exploited both privately and publicly for these sales.

For the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia and for the hard-pressed oil and gas sector, both private and public—what is left in Petro-Canada that is public—it would mean an opportunity led by this government to create jobs and bring in offshore investment in an industry that is deeply in need of a lift.

I am proposing four firm contracts by provincial governments under federal auspices for sales of natural gas into Korea, Japan, Taiwan and perhaps exploring the market into Hong Kong, but that is questionable. There is a need in those countries I mentioned for this consistent, variable energy supply.

In getting caps, governments are not permitted to initiate the kind of aggressive sales action that is necessary to follow through on this idea. That is why I am opposed to the capping.

Two ships built with the capacity to carry liquefied natural gas which only has an 8 per cent loss in conversion would provide \$50 million immediately to the shipyards of western Canada. I say this without bias or favour to the shipyards in my own riding. On the east coast of Canada, another \$50 million would also be made available.

Subject to the contracts of the sale of the LNG, we would demand at least 60 per cent of the carrying capacity. Those ships would be built here in Canada. We would demand 75 to 80 per cent of the maintenance of an LNG fleet to be able to provide jobs on a consistent basis. By capping the shares of the federal government to the provinces, the initiation of this kind of work has become curtailed.

I present, in a spirit of non-partisanship, at a time of national emergency around our economy, yet another idea of bold leadership that is needed.

I appeal to the government to understand that the people of this country want leadership, a government with will and a government with purpose. The current government only offers Canadians through this kind of legislation cuts, cuts and cuts with no hope whatsoever of alternate plans. I am disappointed to have to say that that is exactly what we are getting.

We Canadians are better than that. We can rise above our partisan differences on an occasion, as difficult as it may be for me, but this time this crisis demands that kind of leadership. Frankly, I think the Tories are exhausted. Their batteries are run down. They cannot provide this kind of leadership. The only option is either cancel this kind of legislation or, for God's sake, call an election.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, since this is my first opportunity to speak on a piece of legislation in this House this year, I would like to say a happy New Year to all of my constituents in Ottawa Centre as well as all Canadians across this great land.

Like the vast majority of the members of this House, I had the opportunity during the past two months to speak with many of my constituents, some of whom are quite upset about the policy of the federal government, many of whom are upset at the policy of the provincial government and those who are upset at both of them at the same time.

Along with that, I have met some very interesting groups of constituents who were not complaining. They were not complaining at all. As a matter of fact, they were making suggestions during these tough economic times. I thought I would make a habit of bringing forward those suggestions to the attention of the House of Commons every time I have a chance.

One of the suggestions that I was very impressed by was made by Brian Weatherdon of St. Andrew's church. I met with Brian not too long ago. He brought to my