

Canada Oil and Gas Act

participate in their own petroleum industry, then the legislation we have before us will, in part, present the occasion for them to do so. We have seen in Canada as much as 90 per cent of our petroleum industry controlled outside our own country, and it is only recently that Canadian governments have begun to take the initiative to ensure that that massive ownership be controlled and in some way reduced through higher incentives for Canadians to participate in their own industry.

● (2150)

It will be no surprise to anyone who is aware of the Canadian economic debate over the past years that there has been widespread concern about the level of foreign ownership within our country. I am not sure some of the hon. members opposite have yet focused on that concern, but a recent poll taken by the Canadian Petroleum Association, an association dominated by large multinational corporations, and other public opinion polls have indicated overwhelming support—80 per cent or 90 per cent support—for a greater degree of Canadianization of our petroleum industry. That is why in the bill before us there are major incentives for Canadians to take part in their industry in a way that they have not had occasion to do previously.

This bill is not in any way anti anyone. The bill is pro Canadian. It is an effort on the part of this government to open the way and to provide the opportunity to Canadians to take an interest, to participate and to play a part in their own vital energy sector.

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the comments of the parliamentary secretary. I do not think anyone in this House who is reasonable would argue in favour of foreign ownership of any industry in Canada. That is not what any of the members of my party have been doing. We want Canadian ownership. Over the period of years that the Liberal Party has been in power ministers have worked toward Canadian ownership of the petroleum industry, and with some success, but the way they have been doing it has never been argued in this House because they have been doing it in the orthodox and accepted way. This bill would give the power to a government to do things we would not permit an individual to do.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) is a lawyer, and he talked about this in terms of transferring a share. If shares were being transferred in the way the rank and file of the people of Canada transfer shares, there would be no argument in this House. If I want to transfer half my lot to somebody, I make a deal with him. We decide on the price. He deposits the money with the lawyer, the lawyer has the matter transferred in the land titles office, and when the lawyer gives the purchaser the title to that share of my land, the lawyer gives me the money given to him by the purchaser. That is transferring a share. However, this bill says:

Where the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources directs the transfer of a Crown share under this section, the Minister shall forthwith give notice thereof to the relevant interest holders.

I emphasize the word “directs”. This bill allows someone who has power to say, “This is going to such and such a person; it is no longer yours.” A million dollars might be spent in the north finding a successful oil well—and I hope there will be many—and the minister can direct that part of that find will go to a Crown corporation. It makes the minister a partner in the oil found. It will not just be found by multinationals but also by small independent companies because a large portion of our petroleum industry is made up of small companies. However, the minister will direct that 25 per cent of that will no longer belong to the company involved. The company will have spent its money, but the minister will be able to say that the oil no longer totally belongs to the company. A share will be transferred forthwith. That is not transferring. That is why our motion talks about negotiations. That is why financial costs and economics are referred to. Our motion talks about a deal if a transfer is required, but we should be fair about it. I am very concerned that we are doing things at the direction of a government. That is confiscation. Some hon. members have called it theft. We are authorizing theft by law, and I object to authorizing that type of thing. We are saying to the young people of Canada that it is all right for a minister of the Crown to direct the transfer of somebody else’s property without compensation and without the Crown’s sharing in the cost incurred in finding the resource. Do hon. members opposite call that fair? That has never been done by a Liberal government or any other government in this country. How can that be called fair? What do we call it when a young person’s father directs him to steal a roast of beef from the butcher shop?

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Just transferring it.

Mr. Taylor: Is that just transferring it? He was directed by his father, but that does not make it right, and putting this into legislation does not make it right. This is morally wrong, and I plead with hon. members on the government side that we not have to tell the young people of this country that it is all right to steal and not pay, that it is all right to confiscate and that it is all right to transfer someone else’s property without compensation. That is not the Canadian way. Those we will honour on Remembrance Day did not fight for that kind of country. We want fair dealings and honest dealings, and when we start authorizing the direction of one person’s property into the hands of someone else without proper arbitration and without making a proper deal—without negotiations and without entering into an agreement—that is not transferring shares at all. It is expropriation. It is confiscation. In ordinary language, it is theft. We should not condone the theft of property.

Let me give a simple illustration. We are talking about millions of acres in the north, but let us say I spent a lot of money on my little lot. Let us say I had a lovely lawn and a lovely flower garden. Then the mayor of the city says, “I am going to give part of that to your neighbour who spent no money and let weeds grow on his land.” The mayor is going to transfer a share of my land to someone else without my having anything to say about it. Is that right? There is not an hon.