

Energy

This understanding broke apart, and all this sweetness, light and co-operative effort for achieving policy died when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) came to this House on September 4 and issued that phony statement about controlling prices in Canada for consumers. At that time I referred to the statement as a gaffe, as a mistake, as a boob; because the facts were self-evident. You cannot control the rising tide. The posturing of the Prime Minister in the special session of Parliament called to deal with railway matters was designed to head off the loud voices raised across Canada about rising prices. The NDP, which had been partners in this undeclared marriage with the Liberals, were among those who raised their voices. They always follow the crowd. The Prime Minister, thinking only how to head off a negative vote in that special session, introduced the proposals of September 4.

Among those proposals was a series coming from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Suddenly, there was a call from the Prime Minister's office, asking the minister to prepare ways in which prices might be kept down in the energy field. Without consulting the people in the government who were knowledgeable, and without consulting the National Energy Board or the industry, the people in the government called on their political friends in the Liberal party and in other parties for advice. At that time there was a popular call for a two-price system. The government did not know how it would work, but they announced it. At that time controlled prices were popular; so, the government announced that.

From that time, from September 4, the minister, who worked hard to learn about the ins and outs of his department, suddenly turned this way, that way and every other way. We now see the image of a minister who has lost the confidence, not only of his fellow parliamentarians but also of the provinces with which he must work in a co-operative way. He must work with the provinces if we are to make a resource policy work, because under the constitution resources belong to the provinces. As well, he must work with industry, which is a partner with the provincial governments in the development of these resources.

Since September 4, for most of the time during the last two or three months, the government has been rushing this way and that way. Therefore, the first question that members should decide in this debate on behalf of the people of Canada has to do with the credibility of the minister. Hon. members heard him this afternoon talking about transmission grids and about the development of nuclear power from CANDU. The Conservative government announced the transmission grid for Canada in 1958. All the plans were ready to be announced in Parliament in 1963. The records of this Parliament will show that that report has been buried since 1963. The minister tried to sneak by this fact by suggesting that there might be a little line from one part of Newfoundland to another part of Newfoundland, and there might even be one to P.E.I. The credibility of the minister has gone. All these changes in policy have destroyed confidence in him not only in this House, but in every province in Canada and particularly in many industries.

It was bad enough when the minister was in the soup, changing policy from hour to hour. Then, the Prime Minis-

ter got in the act. One night on television he said publicly that there was nothing wrong; there is no shortage in supplies. The next month he was talking of different policies. He spoke as if he had been born one of the Montreal elite, who in the thirties spoke of the day when those who are superior in intelligence would gain control of this country, as only the intelligentsia from Montreal should control it. This man, who thought that way back in those days, is now the Prime Minister. His supporter, the NDP leader, is another graduate of that elite school in Montreal which has complete contempt for the ordinary person in Canada. They do not believe ordinary people can think for themselves on this type of subject. That was suggested today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): The key issue Canadians must decide today is this: we are missing opportunities for Canada, opportunities that Canada never had before. The opportunities were not there 15 years ago or 20 years ago. They were not there ten years ago, but they are here now. I am speaking about opportunities arising globally for our gas and oil. We must also discuss the charade of the government in going this way and that way in implementing policy. Is this an attempt to make people frightened, as the leader of the Créditistes suggested, when there is no genuine shortage of oil in Canada? Is the government doing this because it is trying to hide its failure on the monetary and fiscal side and avoid the question of high interest rates and high prices? That issue ought to be debated today, and I imagine it will be dealt with.

Fourth, we must consider the attack that the minister and the Prime Minister have launched against a very good system of government called federalism. Federalism can only work if the federal government stays within its jurisdiction and if the provinces stay within their jurisdiction. Working together, they can make it work. The attack that has been launched in the last three and a half months on the provinces has not only been an attack against Alberta; it has been an attack against every provinces. That point must be answered.

My contribution to this debate will concern itself mainly with the opportunities for Canada that the present situation creates. It is a fact that Japan, Europe and the United States are short of energy. That is fact No. 1. It is also a fact that the Persian Gulf countries, the Arab countries, as we call them, as well as North Africa, South America and Canada, have a surplus in energy. Moreover, the supply of oil is now being used for political purposes. Not only are the Arabs demanding a fair price for their oil, but they are using production and price as a means of achieving their political ends.

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Another fact is that oil movement across the world has in the past been dominated by international companies. Fifty years ago they began to prescribe a rule of law to deal with rising and falling world prices. Markets and prices were controlled. Their policy was plentiful supplies at the lowest possible price. So for 50 years the price of oil around the world has scarcely varied. No group of govern-