

Energy

or so can be spent to build Mirabel, and that \$1 billion can be written off the deficit of the CNR.

An hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. McCain: Newfoundland should be given the change. That province requires assistance. Hon. members opposite should speak for their provinces rather than for their leader. They would receive more votes if they stood up in the House and spoke on behalf of their provinces, instead of ridiculing hon. members who go out of their way to speak on behalf of their provinces. What I have said applies to Newfoundland, just as much as it applies to New Brunswick. Hon. members opposite should return to their constituencies with that message.

In all fairness, Atlantic Canada deserves the negotiations which could be brought about by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson), the Deputy Prime Minister and President of Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, if they were seriously interested in Canada and could look beyond the two central provinces which hold the vast majority of their seats, with a scattering of loyal support in Newfoundland and New Brunswick. The Atlantic provinces require that help, as well as development. I plead with the minister not to down-play any other region, but to up-play the Atlantic requirements along with all other requirements in Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) is seeking the floor. The Standing Orders do not allow the right of reply at third reading. The only way the minister could speak at this time would be with unanimous consent. Second reading is considered as a substantive motion, as indicated in citation 166 of Beauchesne. The mere fact of moving the motion, or having the motion moved in the name of the hon. minister, is interpreted as his having contributed to the debate. Is there unanimous consent to allow the minister to close the debate at this time?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I thank hon. members for their indulgence in according me this privilege. I intend to speak for only a very few minutes, five minutes more or less. It is my understanding that all parties have agreed with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) to proceed very quickly, after my closing remarks, with one particular bill before the House.

● (2142)

There have been all kinds of allegations during the course of this third reading debate. Quite clearly I am not in a position, in view of the time available and the subject of the debate, to answer all of them. Many, of course, were irresponsible, and one got the impression at times that the weaker the argument the louder the noise. Hon. members will be able to identify the particular hon. member from Newfoundland who best qualifies for that particular cachet.

[Mr. McCain.]

Members on this side recognize that the official opposition was agonizing over this bill. They demonstrated to all of us and to those watching this debate on television that they are prepared to debase their own credibility when they have to vote for a government bill. They seem to find every opportunity to discuss everything but the bill, and that was very clear in their remarks this evening.

One hon. member, the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton), for example, said that they will vote for it; that it is a very important bill; it is a bill which is very important to national security. Then obviously he recognized he had gone too far and said: "But it is an evil bill."

The noisy failure from St. John's East went on and on and, as I have indicated, the weaker his argument the louder he shouted. I think the Conservatives in particular showed a great deal of ingenuity in avoiding the main issues of this bill and in trying to divert attention from its provisions.

I think the NDP did a pretty good job too. I was impressed by the ability of two NDP spokesmen who addressed themselves to the question of gasoline prices, the difference in the retail price of gasoline as between one community and another, or in some cases, differences within one city. Indeed, one of the members asked why it could not be like beer. It was pretty obvious where the mind of that particular party was in this debate. It required a member of the Creditiste party to bring them back to order by pointing out, quite rightly of course, that the whole area of retail pricing for gasoline is not a federal responsibility at all but rather a provincial responsibility. It is surprising to those of us on this side that members of the NDP have taken so long to recognize what is fundamental to the Canadian constitution.

We on this side have always listened to the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) whenever he has talked about freedom of information. He has developed quite a reputation over the years as a man who has espoused the case of freedom of information. He used this debate to raise the issue of freedom of information, suggesting that this bill in some way concealed information. What he did not do was to make the point, and what he did not do, of course, was face up to the issue which has been raised by his own colleague, the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Andre), that there is another bill, Bill C-12, the Petroleum Corporation Monitoring Act, which attempts to provide greater disclosure of how the funds from an oil price increase are used. Those members who have followed that particular debate in committee will realize that the Tories are not the slightest bit interested in the freedom of information. Indeed, they have done everything they can to prevent that bill from coming before this House so the Canadian people could receive that information on how those funds are being spent.

This bill is an important bill. It should be seen as a part, but only a part, of an integrated series of measures by the government to increase the development of Canadian oil resources. I refer particularly to the fact that this bill has been brought in to provide the international price for Syncrude, a very high priced resource, and a price which was promised at the time