

ment and the provinces, which has resulted in the Prime Minister calling the Premier of Alberta insulting names and in the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources making certain public commitments which he has reversed, or which the Prime Minister has reversed for him, is damaging to Canadians in all parts of this country.

Confidence in the oil industry today is at an all-time low. I repeat, in expressing concern about the industry, I am not concerned about owners or shareholders. As I said on another occasion, there are probably more shareholders in those companies living in the constituencies of Mount Royal, Rosemount or even Ottawa-Carleton, than in Calgary Centre. I am concerned about the thousands of ordinary Canadians who are making their living in this industry. As a result of this lack of confidence, many are finding that their jobs are in jeopardy. Indeed, some have lost their jobs. This is of concern to me, because many of these people live in my constituency; I am expressing their views. Moreover, sir, the question of lack of confidence is of concern to all Canadians, even to those who are not even remotely connected with the energy industry. We must all be concerned about the future of the industry, and the degree of exploration which is taking place. The degree of exploration is being reduced and will be reduced to an alarming degree unless industry confidence is restored.

During the Christmas recess I made it my business to consult with a number of spokesmen for the industry. I talked to industrial associations and tried to assess what was happening. Many expressed the view to me that next year there will be a 40 per cent reduction in exploration by oil companies in western Canada. I am referring to the area south of the sixtieth parallel but north of the North American border. If they are right, the implications for the future are tremendously important. Production from conventional sources can be expected to decrease over the next few years. Unless we find new, conventional sources of energy, we shall become net importers of crude oil and suffer from all the problems which are plaguing Britain, the United States, the Netherlands and other countries.

We cannot rely entirely on the tar sands to overcome this problem. At the very best, under optimum conditions, a tar sands plant can only be brought on stream every two years. Even in these circumstances, even if a new plant were brought on stream every two years, each plant to produce 100,000 barrels per day—and this would require major effort and cost and would bring great stress and dislocation to the economy—we should be lucky if we could keep up with the growth in Canadian consumption. We could not produce the increased supplies of tar sands oil that would be necessary to make up for the decrease in production from conventional sources. That being so, I submit that it is exceedingly important, in considering pricing and supply, for government attitudes to be made clear at the earliest opportunity. Industry must know what the rules will be, so that it can plan and make an increased exploration effort, and so that Canadians will not be in a vulnerable position in the future. In that way we shall remain self-sufficient in energy and look forward to the future with certainty.

More important even than questions involving the oil industry and future supplies is the fact that economic

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opportunities are being lost. Canada, relative to the rest of the world, is in the position to enjoy economic advantages the like of which we have not seen in the postwar period. We have a potential economic advantage because, as the minister and so many others have said recently, energy is fundamentally important to a modern economy, and we are the only country in the western world which is self-sufficient in energy. This fact alone is tremendously important, for here we have a tremendous opportunity to cure so many of the problems we have faced for many years, problems involving regional economic disparities, unemployment, economic disparities, the diversification of industry throughout the economy, our balance of payments, the sale of our raw materials at less than their true value, etc. All these problems could be cured if we made it our business to take advantage of the tremendous opportunity being offered to us.

We need a national development policy that recognizes our position. What we do not need is bickering between the provinces and the federal government about control of resources. We all have the same goals in mind. I am certain that every provincial premier, whether from a producing province or consuming province, will agree. There is now an opportunity not merely for the producing provinces but for every province in this country. In recent years two large scale refineries have been constructed in the Atlantic provinces and two or three more are on the verge of construction. A great many petrochemical plants are to be built to process raw materials which will be available from these refineries. These can and should be established in the Atlantic area. There is the possibility of altering the economic face of these regions of Canada dramatically; but this will not happen if we continue the present chaotic situation. Sometimes there is a two-price system in Canada, sometimes not. Sometimes the world price is to apply, sometimes less than the world price. Sometimes there is a freeze in part of the country, sometimes not.

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All that uncertainty of opportunities will cause us to lose this advantage. We will not have this economic advantage in perpetuity. The United States will make a supreme effort to become self-sufficient in energy. They have the potential in coal, shale, new technological developments relating to solar power and so on. Therefore, we cannot look to Canada retaining this economic advantage for a large number of years in the future. It is a finite time in which we have this opportunity. I ask the minister to use his good offices to plead with his colleagues. I ask every member of this House to help us eliminate this question of fighting between the provinces, of fighting over the spoils, who shall get so much of this or that tax. Let us deal with the real opportunity facing Canada. Let us take advantage of the position in which Canada finds itself so that all Canadians can look forward to the future they deserve.

I will not repeat the remarks made by my leader earlier this day. He outlined 10 points of a national oil policy which, if adopted by the government of Canada, could lead us to the kind of future I have tried to outline briefly. I just wish to comment on one point relative to the question