

Government Orders

My riding of Malpeque on Prince Edward Island is a rural riding. Such decisions which may not appear to be substantial can really have a major impact on a small community. Such a decision was certainly made by this government when it closed our CFB Summerside. It may not have been a substantial decision when one looks at the enormity of the Government of Canada as a whole, but it had a substantial effect on the lives of many of us in Prince Edward Island. In fact, the after shocks of that decision are still being felt today.

Just last week when I returned to my riding, islanders were concerned about a decision that had been made by Holland College to discontinue adult education classes at Summerside and Kensington as of January, 1991. These classes had to be cancelled due to a shortage of funds. That shortage of funds is really due to two decisions made by the federal government. The first was the closing of the base. Because of that closure, a number of islanders, in an attempt to put their lives back together, enrolled in the Holland College adult education courses to better prepare themselves for finding a new job. This larger enrollment created an under-funding situation.

The second reason was the government's decision to cut back on the funding to the provinces for education. That also of course contributed to the shortage of available funds. Fortunately, the provincial government came to the rescue and provided the extra funding needed to keep these important educational courses alive in 1991. I commend the Ghiz government for its swift and timely action on this matter.

• (1250)

I also commend the students for having the courage and initiative to go back to school to upgrade their skills and knowledge. But, I certainly condemn this government for its policies which created this crisis in the first place.

I condemn the government today for imposing time allocation and so denying me an opportunity to speak in detail about the effects that this bill will have on Canadians, especially Canadians in eastern Canada.

In my province of Prince Edward Island, as in all provinces in eastern Canada, we are very dependent on imported oil. The continuity of supply of this non-renewable resource is paramount to our economic growth and

prosperity. Across Canada, the energy demand for petroleum is about 41 per cent, which certainly is a significant figure. However, in Prince Edward Island, we are doubly dependent upon petroleum for a total of 75 per cent of our energy demand.

We are trying to diversify the energy mix in my province through efforts in such areas as the biomass energy field which involves the burning of wood chips at very high temperatures. This initiative has provided the Island with an environmentally friendly energy source, along with badly needed jobs. Unfortunately, these efforts have been frustrated by the government's cuts to alternative energy and conservation programs. This is yet another example of the government's complete lack of attention to my province of Prince Edward Island. This bill may very well place Prince Edward Island in an even more volatile economic position due to our dependency on imported petroleum.

I urge the government to consider the ramifications of its decisions on the real people out there. There is more to effective decision-making than simply adhering to the bottom line. This bill requires a thorough and full debate due to the complexity of the subject matter itself.

This morning I expected that we in the opposition would have an opportunity to address the concerns of our constituents, concerns that the government is ignoring and which the government is not allowing to be heard in detail in this Chamber.

It is no wonder that Canadians have lost confidence in this government. I certainly regret not having the opportunity to speak in full detail today on the privatization of Petro-Canada.

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Madam Speaker, I cannot say I am pleased with having to speak on time allocation today, but I want the opportunity to do so because I think that we are faced here with an approach by the government to push through the privatization process of Petro-Canada as quickly as possible. It recognizes that there is a growing wave of discontent across the country relative, not only to this particular bill, but to many other government actions.

This bill is the largest privatization in the history of this government or any other government and covers assets of \$6.7 billion on which it will take a loss. There is no way that, under the structure that is being established in this bill, it will get this amount back.