

ronmental aspect, abridges and invades an area which does not under ordinary circumstances belong to the federal government. That in itself is warning enough. However, when in respect of this particular part of the bill we find this extraordinary reply from the minister, when he says he knows of no existing federal or provincial legislation which will in fact be overridden, I ask why in the name of heaven are we looking at this bill which in effect would abridge environmental legislation? If the government's view is that this will apply only to some municipal legislation, let it say so; let the government tell us exactly what is its area of concern. But please don't come and ask me, an opposition member, in the face of silence and no explanation—what explanation we have been given makes no sense—to rush off pell-mell to give the government this authority unless the government can justify it.

● (1610)

I do not think we will be thanked by the Canadian people if we sit back and then finally go along with a provision like this. After all, too many members of the Canadian public have worked too long with legislators over a period of years to build up the body of environmental law which we presently have. I take some comfort from comments of the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis). I know that often his remarks are not designed to give me or anybody else any comfort—and that is fair enough, Mr. Speaker. But as recorded at page 8754 of *Hansard*, the hon. member said in part:

Certainly there is great need for clarification of a number of proposals in the bill. Certainly there is great need for a number of amendments, because some of the powers are unnecessarily large or unnecessarily wide.

I certainly agree with that. Further, I do not think that what I have said will meet with too much disagreement on the government side. I would urge the government, when this bill reaches committee, to co-operate with all hon. members in making sure that, in an attempt to take the responsibility that is the government's and effectively to establish some machinery to combat a possible shortfall in some parts of the country, we do not go overboard on this question and pass legislation which has not been defended, which is probably indefensible and which goes a long way to wiping out the work of the last half dozen years.

[*Translation*]

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, since the introduction of Bill C-236, I have listened with great interest to all those who spoke, especially to our leader the hon. member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Caouette) and several of our colleagues. I had not intended to speak on second reading, but owing to the turn of the discussion and the determination of the Progressive Conservative members to carry on with this debate, I thought that I should urge this House to be a little bit more understanding.

Personally, I must admit that I am not overly enthusiastic about that bill, while I am willing to have it read a second time before Christmas to allow a more thorough consideration by the standing committee, even if we have to return to this House after New Year's and the meeting with the provinces to have it passed. Like many other members, I regret that the government did not chose to

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introduce this bill after consulting with all of the provinces of Canada, both oil-producing and oil-consuming.

As was so rightly stated by our leader, the hon. member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Caouette), the present chain of events is leading us very rapidly towards an economic crisis nearly as serious as that of the Thirties, if the government does not assume its responsibilities and does not co-operate with all the provinces to put a stop to the financial ambitions of the oil giants for whom money has precedence over the security of the population. This government, faithful servant to big finance, invokes the urgency of the situation to have the bill adopted this time without any consultation with the provinces.

The previous speaker was wondering a moment ago why the government is requesting such extraordinary powers by introducing Bill C-236. Mr. Speaker, we are used to the tactics of this centralizing government. Very cleverly they create emergency situations to force Parliament into enacting legislation which the population will reprove soon afterwards in order to further extend their rule over the whole country, encroaching more and more upon provincial jurisdictions. I say to the hon. member who has spoken a moment ago that this is the reason for introducing this extraordinary emergency measure. At times I think that I am reliving the end of the thirties when this same central government pretexting the urgency of winning the war brought Parliament to approve the 1942 agreements which turned provincial governments into mere vassals of the federal government.

● (1620)

Today the federal government wants to do still more than stealing the taxation rights exclusive to the provinces. It wants to become the absolute master of all energy powers in Canada. It knows well that all natural resources belong exclusively to the provinces. It wants to infringe on that field and its only weapon is the pretext of emergency. The minister will say that this is temporary and he notes that even in the bill. But we are convinced in advance that this temporary act will become permanent just like the agreement of 1942 through which the central government undertook to give back to the provinces three fields of taxation as soon as the war would end.

There came about the situation we are faced with, Mr. Speaker, a war of nerves to reconquer what we had lent to those wordless centralisers in Ottawa. As the old saying goes, if you want indeed to control two men stronger than you, have them fight together, or still, divide to rule. That is indeed what this government is doing, dividing the provinces, having them fight among themselves to better possess them. That is monstrous, will you say, but that is the truth. And all that for the sake of Canadian unity.

First, of course, we must ask ourselves, Mr. Speaker, if there is really an oil shortage in Canada. One has only to read non finance owned or controlled newspapers to realize that there is no real shortage but rather a provoked and well orchestrated shortage even if in a boogymen manner the Minister for Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) came into this House trumpeting that we were going to be short of fuel this winter, that we were going to freeze, that we were going to be short of gasoline. He even went as far as saying that we would be short of electric