

**Mr. Baker:** The government has not come clean with the Canadian public.

**Mr. Stevens:** It is in that context that I oppose the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. The government is proposing an extremely serious measure in Bill C-236. Tremendous powers will be given to a board, if and when a state of emergency is declared.

Contrary to what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre indicated, when Mr. Armstrong, the President of Imperial Oil, appeared before the committee he made it very clear that he was virtually in complete agreement with allocation Bill C-236.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Stevens:** I notice that the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais) endorses that view. Surely, nothing demonstrated more clearly the fact that it was this government, working in unison with the large multinational oil corporations, which fostered this piece of legislation.

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In view of the comment by the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), I might point out that Mr. Armstrong was a witness of the hon. member for York-Simcoe.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger):** Perhaps I should indicate that, in my opinion, that is a point of debate rather than a point of order.

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, the only witness we succeeded in calling was called to appear before the committee by the committee.

**An hon. Member:** At whose suggestion?

**Mr. Stevens:** I feel that had the committee been allowed to call those witnesses on the list we proposed, we would now have a much better informed membership in this House than we have at the present time.

**Mr. Bawden:** They don't want that.

**Mr. Stevens:** In my opinion, the more witnesses we called the more able we would have been to demonstrate that this government was simply acting as a taxi for the seven major international oil companies.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger):** Does the hon. member rise on a question of privilege?

**Mr. Blais:** No, Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to suggest that it is completely contrary to the rules of this House, and the rules of the committees of this House, to refer to anything that took place in the steering committee except the report of that committee. I would point out that the report of the steering committee only recommended that appearance of Mr. Armstrong before the committee. My friend's reference is most irregular. We must remember that the committee has already made its report. The decision of the steering committee, as I recall it, only recommended the calling of the President of the Imperial Oil Company, whereas hon. members opposite wanted to call the presidents of Texaco, Gulf and a number of others

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from the large multinational corporations the hope that the position they were taking would be supported. Much to their chagrin that was not the case, but rather the government's position was supported.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger):** I suggest that is not actually a point of order. Hon. members must remember that the committee has made its report to the House, and I agree that the hon. member is entitled to refer to that committee report as well.

**Mr. Baker:** Of course. Go back to sleep.

**Mr. Alexander:** You have been here long enough to know that.

● (1720)

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, If I may continue my comments on the amendment, I might refer to the fact that the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais) raised the question of who called Mr. Armstrong. We were not at all disturbed by the testimony of Mr. Armstrong, because it demonstrated exactly what we have been saying, which is that this government is acting as a tool of the major international companies.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, when one receives this type of flack one knows he is hitting where it hurts. With that background, as I have said, I am quite certain, had we been given the opportunity—and incidentally now that the minister has returned to his chair he cannot deny it—to call the witnesses we proposed, to call before the committee there would have been some very revealing statements to show exactly why the government is proposing this legislation at the present time.

I would emphasize it was our group which proposed that the declaration of an emergency be referred to the House of Commons and the Senate, and that it be negated or otherwise by those two bodies, rather than be left solely to the government to decide, as had been proposed. It was not the hon. members to the left who agreed. They did agree subsequently, but it was our proposal, and I say it is a stronger proposal since it is a two-pronged proposal involving the House of Commons and the Senate.

Having said that I find it very strange that the allies of the government, the hon. members to my left, should be disturbed. After all there are some 70-odd Liberal members sitting in the Senate at the present time, and their leader sits in the cabinet. Surely, we do not think that the odds would be less than 100 to one against the Senate ever negating a state of emergency which had been declared and approved in this House.

So, I am saying, in dealing with this type of legislation, the NDP has come up with a trumped-up argument. The members of the NDP know that the question of whether or not the Senate is included is of virtually no consequence. I am saying that it is a safeguard in the event that this House, for any reason, should not negative a motion perhaps the Senate would do so. Then, the nation should perhaps decide whether there was truly an emergency or whether the government had attempted to mislead the people of Canada.