

*Energy Supplies Emergency Act*

effect of an absence of energy and petroleum. The government has a responsibility to introduce this bill at this time in order to forestall the difficulties.

Mr. Speaker, in order to indicate that there has been a strenuous objection to the strength of this bill, I might point to section 11, which evidently the hon. member for Peace River had not read,—

**Mr. Stevens:** Stick to the principle.

**Mr. Blais:** The hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) says that I am not dealing with the principle. Yes, I am, but I cannot leave on the record statements that are made without foundation by a member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. I have to reply to the groundless statements, and one of them is that the bill is too powerful. I suggest that if it is too powerful, and the minister is attempting to assume powers that are usually exercised by the provinces, the constitution protects the Canadian people through the division of powers which indicate that only in a state of emergency can the powers which are proposed be exercised. That is the situation, Mr. Speaker, and I suggest that section 11 states exactly that. The passage of this bill does not mean that the board is created; this bill does not take effect until the Governor in Council determines there is a situation of emergency which requires that the provisions of the bill come into play. Section 11 reads:

When the Governor in Council is of the opinion that a national emergency exists by reason of actual or anticipated shortages of petroleum or disturbances in the petroleum markets that affect or will affect the national security—

He can apply the provisions of this particular statute. The constitution is very clear and section 91 of the British North America Act relating to order and good government is very clear. These particular provisions could not be brought into play unless and until there is an emergency. So much for the hon. member's objection with reference to the powers that are to be exercised, Mr. Speaker.

I might also indicate that there was a strong objection—or at least I thought it was but we never know whether the hon. member for Peace River is taking a partisan view or being serious about a matter he is advancing—to sections 14 and 15 of the bill dealing with the control over electricity and discussions with the provinces. He suggested these sections cannot be applied under the constitutional position I have just indicated. Surely, in a time of crisis no one would seriously advance the proposition that the government of Canada, in order to benefit the whole of Canada, would not have a right in the event that there were one or two recalcitrant provinces, to take those measures to bring them into line and to administer that source of energy which may be completely within their boundaries. Surely, that is the aim of the bill, but it is a powerful measure that is not to be taken unless there is an emergency.

It may be that after next week we will have an energy situation which would require measures to be taken, and we might not have a parliament to take them as a result of an opposition motion. The government, therefore, has an obligation to protect the welfare of the Canadian people by presenting legislation of this nature.

Because of the time available to me, Mr. Speaker, I will try to deal with those objections that I find most impor-

[Mr. Blais.]

tant. There is the objection relating to the destruction of popular safeguards which have been enacted into law. The hon. member was referring to environmental situations and the Combines Act. Perhaps he had not paid too much attention to the matter, but he forgot to mention that there are provisions in the bill relating to consultation with the ministers responsible prior to any of the regulations being passed which affect some of the present provisions of the law. I should like to cite clause 24(2) with regard to environmental considerations which reads:

Before making a regulation under this section, the Board shall consult with the Minister of the Environment regarding the relaxation of any provisions of law relating to the control of emission of pollutants into the environment.

Surely, those provisions are there to protect the Canadian people, just as the environmental statutes are there to protect the Canadian people. But there may be situations where these particular laws will have to be bent in order to provide a greater good, that of the health and welfare of the nation. The same applies to the Combines Investigation Act, the Transportation Act and the National Energy Board Act. I suggest that is only reasonable, and I do not find anything objectionable in these provisions.

There was also an objection to the duration of the bill. Clause 35 explicitly indicates that this shall be no longer than November of 1974, when these measures shall simply expire. If we want to extend the effect of these measures, we will have to come before this House and debate whether an emergency condition continues which would justify the continuation of the provisions of the bill.

The hon. member also objected to the intrusion of the provisions of this bill on the rights of the Canadian people. As was pointed out by the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), the only persons against whom the intrusion would be directed would be those multinational corporations which control 92 per cent and 99 per cent of our production and refining capacities respectively. When I hear reference to this question of intrusion, I cannot recall any questions from members of the loyal opposition when the quotas of certain private individuals in Canada were being curtailed as a result of a shortfall of oil production or refined products. I do not remember any sort of concern then, so I am wondering whether the accusations coming from the party to the left of the Loyal Opposition that they are indeed a lobby for the big oil companies, have not some truth in them. They are only defending an intrusion against those people involved in the petroleum industry.

● (1740)

Finally, the last point I wish to make in the few minutes available to me is this: the hon. member indicated that there is existing legislation on the statute books which will permit the government to do exactly what it wants. I am surprised at the extent of the information available to the hon. member. Nevertheless, he did not state specific examples, so far as I could ascertain. He merely indicated that he has looked casually over the whole field of available legislation. Indeed, his may have been a casual view, a casual examination, indicative of the attitude his party has taken on matters affecting energy within this nation. That party indeed is very casual in its procedures with regard to analysis. I find that objectionable, and I suggest