

*Petroleum Administration Act*

to our duty. We will ensure that this bill receives this kind of scrutiny. It will be our intention to make sure that witnesses are called who are essential and that when the departmental witnesses are called for the purpose of finding out facts about the bill they will not hide behind the apron of the minister.

Now, I should like to come back to the point I was making when I was so rudely interrupted by the minister. I was dealing with the question of the federal-provincial conference. I think such conferences are good. They are a vital part of our life. However, I think this House, this Parliament, has a responsibility not to be a rubber-stamp for the decisions of 11 heads of state who gather together like sultans and emperors to decide the destiny of Canada. I appreciate their coming together. I think this is an essential part of the process of government in this country. We must remember, however, that some of these 11 leaders have either just come out of elections or are headed into elections. Since this federal provincial first minister's conference was held there has been one election.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** A successful one.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Yes. It was a successful election for Mr. Regan and I congratulate him. He was a very distinguished member of this House. Unlike some of the rubber stamps sitting opposite, he was not afraid to get up and challenge the Liberal government when he believed it was wrong. I am sorry that some of the backbenchers of the Liberal Party do not take the lead of the Premier of Nova Scotia, since they know that the government is often wrong.

The point is that one government has had an election and another government plans to hold an election on the 29th of this month. The federal government stands across the way shivering, shaking and trembling in the fear that it will be forced into an election before too long by some unnamed parties in this House which I will not mention at this time. There is nothing wrong with this, but we must remember that when the leaders or the 11 heads of government get together to consider what they propose to do they take into consideration in their calculations what the benefits are to their governments in the prosecution of an election. I think for that and other reasons it is incumbent upon this House, despite the fact that there has been the seal of approval placed upon the agreement, not necessarily upon this bill, to ascertain that the bill does in fact conform with what was agreed upon and then even if it does to consider whether it is good for all parts of Canada. That is our duty and I do not intend to be intimidated by the minister from the exercise of that duty and responsibility.

● (1540)

Let us make a quick analysis of the bill, because I do not think I need to take too long to deal with it. Unlike other bills, it is divided into five parts instead of three. The first part, as the minister told us, deals with the question of the tax or charge. He calls it a petroleum export charge. I do not think the name matters a great deal; it smells just as sweet by any name. Then, parts II and III complement each other and deal with price fixing mechanisms for

[Mr. Baldwin.]

petroleum and petroleum products in Canada. Part IV deals with the compensation to importers to provide some cushion for consumers in eastern Canada as a result of the high prices which they have had to pay for oil coming in from overseas. Part V, of course, is a procedural section.

I want to say that when you look at all the clauses in the bill you find that some very far-reaching powers and authorities are granted in it to the federal government, powers which I do not think have ever been granted in peacetime to a federal government. I went through the bill and I found that it contains 66 clauses of which two or three are purely functional but 22 give complete discretion to either the government, the governor in council, boards or the minister. In other words, more than one third of the clauses vest in the government substantial uncontrolled discretionary powers. In addition to that, there are four regulation granting clauses which in 24 instances grant the power to the governor in council to act by regulation and order in council. This indicates the very substantial extent to which we are being asked in the bill to trust this government with its sorry and chequered history of starts and stops, reverses, mistakes and errors with regard to the whole problem of petroleum products going years back from the time when this government was asked by members of this party and members of the NDP to look to the future and build a pipeline from western Canada to Montreal. This plea was rejected with laughter and scorn by the Liberal government right up to the most recent mess, the great mystery about the Roumanian oil which has yet to be solved in the House in which the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer)—otherwise known as the minister of everything else—and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) got this country into a pretty sorry pickle as a result of which we will lose some \$30 million, \$40 million or \$50 million dollars.

This is the government which is asking us to calmly and confidently vest in it all these extraordinary powers which are contained and itemized in this bill. This is the government which, in the words of the minister a few minutes ago, had such great prescience in anticipating all the problems with regard to the oil and petroleum industry. What a farce, what a sham for this minister to have the unmitigated gall to rise in the House and say that he and the government have been able to anticipate the twistings, turnings and problems with regard to the petroleum industry in Canada. I think it is shameful for the minister to take that position. As a matter of fact, although I do not have much time, I will go through some of the items because I suspect that the minister would appropriate to himself this degree of perfection in connection with his dealings with petroleum products.

I find the following item in the *Toronto Star* of May 7 of 1973: "Prime Minister says Ottawa should not control our energy prices". Only a year ago this great Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) of this great government had the supernatural powers to anticipate what will happen!

I find here another interesting item in the *Globe and Mail* of November 5, 1973 which reads: "Macdonald denies urging cabinet to buy oil firm". We know all of the comings, goings and leakings which went on at that time about the government wanting to buy one of the great multinational oil firms, taking it over and operating it.