

way some very sensitive negotiations on a constitution for this country. The issue that is the most sensitive of all is the issue of the division of powers and resources in our constitution, how much power should go to the provinces and how much to the federal government when it comes to resources and the revenue from those resources.

Here we have a government in the middle of those negotiations that, I assume without consultation with the producing provinces, has brought in a tax that is going to result in hundreds of millions of extra dollars from resources in those two provinces going to the federal government. This is very damaging indeed to a feeling of good will for the negotiations that just finished their first week in Montreal and will go on for two more weeks in Toronto and Vancouver.

For those reasons, Madam Speaker, I think you should look very positively on the question of privilege raised by the Leader of the Opposition, because what the government has done today is sown more disharmony in this country as well as more division and mistrust, and in essence has again pitted the east against the west. This is very unfortunate. I wish the government would learn to stop doing that type of thing. They often wonder why they do not do better in the west. They often ask why the west is unhappy. Here is one example why western Canadians are unhappy with the federal government.

The government have brought this in in the midst of negotiations on oil. The Prime Minister and the Premier of Alberta will be meeting in about a week or two. The government of Saskatchewan is involved as well. We are also in the midst of negotiations on the constitution where resources, energy resources in particular, are the most sensitive of all issues between the ministers. Bringing in this tax is bound to sow more disharmony and disunity in this country.

Mr. J. P. Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Madam Speaker, I too would like to speak briefly on this question of privilege raised by my leader concerning a matter which again is an indication of the fundamental contempt for the parliamentary process which this government so often shows. I am not going to try and get into the merits or demerits of this tax proposal, but I will try to emphasize in a most graphic way what is going on here.

I hope the people of this country, on a Friday afternoon on a summer day, will be tuned in to what is going on here. How many will appreciate that in the election a few short months ago there was something called an 18 cents tax increase which was supposed to produce \$2.5 billion? What the minister has done today outside the House is produce, according to my calculation, a \$1.25 billion tax increase with no reference to the members of the House of Commons. Members cannot ask questions about the implications and the effect that that tax will have. It is almost one half of what the 18 cents provoked across this country a few short months ago.

● (1240)

We have tried to make this point before but unfortunately the neophyte government House leader has not got the point

because he does not understand what Parliament is all about. There is a minister in Montreal trying to set up a new constitution in an atmosphere which frankly, Madam Speaker, has sometimes in this House been very positive because of things which have happened in the last month or so. But how can those ministers go back to wherever they are supposed to meet on Monday—I suppose it is Vancouver—and crash on the table and talk about natural resources, powers and/or faith and confidence when something like this happens on a Friday afternoon?

This is so fundamental, I was frankly amazed. The minister has problems and he has to lay them on the table so we can ask questions. I am a member from Atlantic Canada, which has no option in terms of imported oil. We have no alternative. This oil refinery tax is going to be undoubtedly \$1.75 and up on, perhaps, thermal generation for our electricity. I do not know that. Are there going to be any refund tax credits as we had in our budget? I do not know that either.

What I want to do, Madam Speaker, is try to impress upon the Chair something fundamental. The whole reason for Parliament was the taxing power to try to restrict the King from fighting the Wars of the Roses, with the King going off on the crusades. The lords and nobles used to meet behind the castle walls and try to make sure that they would not have to give so many horses, so much gold, so many troopers or so many wenchens to get—

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Nowlan: —to get the knights to go off and fight in the wars and the crusades. Then the nobles said: "Listen, Mr. King, there comes a halt." I mean, that is the whole reason the commoners—they were not commoners, we all know that, they were the lords and the nobles. But the thing began because there was a House of Commons and they said they were commoners because they were common in terms of the divine right of the King to do what he wanted to do.

That is how the whole thing started, but let us come down to something a little closer to constitutions. I say this seriously. There is no doubt that the government can do what it has done, just as King George III could do what he did. He could do what he did, but look what he did!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nowlan: Look what he did, Madam Speaker. Taxation without representation of those 13 colonies provoked something pretty fundamental which has forever changed the geographic landscape of this continent and the world.

I am not saying today that because of this motion there will be that same kind of provocation and fundamental change in the composition of Canada. But there is a fundamental difference between having the power and the numbers to do what you legally can do and yet trample on the thoughts and the fears, the apprehensions and the sensitivities of those affected by what you legally can do. That is what is going on here.