

the right to decide that its authority to set prices for oil and petrochemical products will become permanent. And if we extrapolate a little and take into account the objectives of the National Energy Board, I think that this bill does not apply only to two provinces but to the ten provinces that make up Canada.

We feel also this centralization spirit which is unfortunately unacceptable if we respect the right of the provinces. I do not say that the government has no responsibility concerning the oil supply in Canada or a better service for Canadians.

The government has responsibilities, but it must assume them in consultation with the provinces. Mr. Chairman, we have heard the comments of several ministers and members of the opposition. The whole campaign promoting extraordinary powers is conducted in the name of national unity and interest. Whether we are to realize national interest or unity, I could not care less. I think we should rather realize national harmony. We are aware of the marked differences that characterize each of our provinces. We have a typical example of this with Alberta and Saskatchewan. There have been hundreds of examples in Quebec for 104 years. Every time a major problem rises, it is in the name of national unity or interest. That is not true, Mr. Chairman, we are wasting our time. To my mind, the time has come to recognize that our major national problems are caused by the different needs of each part of Canada. We have tangible proof that it is national harmony we will have to seek by recognizing the differences between the provinces, and attempting to harmonize them in such a way as to better serve the voters in each region.

We have the proof that it is unthinkable to introduce a bill of national scope which corresponds to the needs of each province. So, it is also impossible to achieve national unity if that objective is to be reached. And it is also impossible to reach that objective, to the extent where the provinces will not feel at home within a federal regime. And once again, with regard to this bill, and many other acts to be introduced which we have already seen, the provinces will not feel at home. The fiasco is already recognized, when the provinces cannot feel at ease within Confederation. The federal government therefore has a responsibility—that of motivating the provinces towards an acceptable consensus, that of co-ordinating the actions of some of the provinces through a form of management acceptable to them, for the greater good of our country; but not by giving the federal government powers which, in the final analysis, belong to the provinces and are recognized as such.

● (2110)

Some provinces already have reacted to the legislation before us. And I think sufficient comments have been expressed in newspapers. Dealing with the province of Quebec particularly, they have already mentioned the position of the minister, Mr. Saint-Pierre, who bluntly urges the provinces to unite against those extraordinary powers.

I think this is clear enough and I believe Mr. Saint-Pierre implicitly expects to get the support of the members from the province of Quebec in this House.

Oil and Petroleum

Of course, the premier of Quebec has not yet made any statement, but he will do so as usual when the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) gives him the opportunity to express his views on that matter. But Mr. Saint-Pierre has a very definite opinion, and his remarks are fairly justified indeed.

Moreover, Mr. Saint-Pierre made a very clear point when asking every province to unite and prevent the federal government from assuming such extraordinary powers.

Quebec, has some hon. members pointed out, has a historical background has a defender of rights. It has always somehow complained, and often with just reason, about the federal government encroaching on some powers. And we could recall the days of the hon. Maurice Duplessis and his successor Mr. Lesage who put up some rather extraordinary fights in the matter of taxes. We also heard Mr. Johnson's representations. We are concerned by Mr. Bourassa's silence. Private members from Quebec might hopefully rouse him and invite him to voice his opinion has other premiers outside Quebec already have in that matter. Today, Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with oil, but next will come mines and electricity. And I am worried about the Quebec premier's silence. That is why I am raising that point. I hope to challenge him into answering at least his minister of industry's invitation and joining other provincial premiers to force the government in Ottawa to act as coordinators and not as centralizers.

I therefore dare hope the hon. members in this House whom the people of Quebec have greatly trusted will also depart from their silence and support the invitation by Mr. Saint-Pierre.

It is not the first time indeed that Quebec ministers invite Quebec members to give a yes answer. Mr. Choquette did so not long ago, Mr. L'Allier very often, and so did Quebec Immigration Minister Bienvenue. It has been done for quite some time.

It is my definite impression, Mr. Chairman, from what I hear, that ministers representing the Quebec government find absolutely no support here, although we have 60 Quebecers. If separatists only will defend the province's sacred rights and oppose the centralizing of such powers, I wonder if Quebec members from the other side could say today they are meeting Quebec's needs.

Let us give examples. By their silence on this bill and on others, as well as by their failure to act on Quebec ministers' requests, they show they have non-inking that they are being taken. So did Mr. Bourassa feel in Paris. I wonder if he was being short-changed, because it appears the deep sea water port will not be forthcoming for Gros-Cacouna, judging from the silence kept by our members and Quebec's premier. There is a direct link there with the energy issue. Not a word is being said on the matter. I would however, Mr. Chairman, recognize the efforts made by the member for Rivière-du-Loup-Témiscouata (Mr. Gendron), who made representations; but nothing was heard of other members on the subject.

The member for Rivière-du-Loup-Témiscouata did not get the support needed. And the ministers responsible for the project are unfortunately too silent too. The proof that this government is getting powers that will be not only