

ing wholesale pricing practices which are consistent with this compensation.

I would only conclude by saying that this is a very important piece of legislation in the evolution of national oil policy. It provides the legislative support which will be required to maintain these national policies, national policies which as I have said have received the concurrence of all the provinces and, I believe, of the Canadian people generally.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I join with the minister at the outset of my remarks in saying how glad we were to see the first ministers arrive at some form of consensus. That does not mean necessarily that we approve of everything in that consensus. I believe this is one of the few occasions when the first ministers did get together and work out a form of agreement, but what bludgeons, what blackmail, what advantages, what favours or what anaesthetics were administered during that meeting I do not know. At least it was a meeting which resulted in some decisions being arrived at, and I am glad for that reason.

I want to say through you, Mr. Speaker, to members of this House that it is our view, and certainly it is mine, that merely because the provincial and federal governments arrived at a decision is no reason that this House, this parliament and certainly not this party should rubber-stamp and accept without challenge, without examination and without the closest possible legal study, the results which were arrived at. We must ensure that the results which were in fact arrived at at that meeting are implemented in this legislation.

● (1530)

The minister quite glibly told us that everything in this bill is the result of the federal-provincial conference. We are not so sure about that. My friend, the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) asked a very searching question today. As I think was his duty, not knowing what the answer would be, he asked the minister whether there had been discussions with the provinces following the first ministers' conference and whether this bill in fact represents the views they have considering what should be in the bill as a result of their discussions. The minister did not answer that question. He could not answer it. In fact he said that they decided in cabinet what would be done, implemented it in legislative form, brought it down and gave it first reading. Now, it is up to the provinces to look at it and decide. As a result, it will be our intention to make very certain during the committee meetings before this bill receives final approval, and certainly before it receives third reading, that there is ample opportunity for the provincial representatives and others to examine the legislation to make certain it in fact contains the arrangement arrived at at this first minister's conference.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether I could ask the hon. member a question? Is he suggesting, as the hon. member for Calgary North suggested, that we ought to have departed from the long standing practice in this House and shown the bill to the governments outside the House before we gave it first reading.

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Mr. Baldwin: My hon. friend has been around here long enough to know that I, and the members of this party, have too great a regard for the rules and traditions of this House to do anything like that, although it might appeal to him and his friends.

I am suggesting that before this bill was brought in for second reading and debate it was the minister's duty to have been in touch with the provincial representatives to ascertain their opinion. He could have told them that this is the bill and before it was brought in for debate he wished to know whether or not they were satisfied that this, in fact, represents in its context the terms of the agreement made. The minister already has indicated that he intends to bring in one amendment at the committee stage. It would have been quite simple for him to have said that he had been in touch with representatives of the provinces of Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Prince Edward Island and so on and they had given him their opinions about the bill. Perhaps he might have been told that in respect of certain aspects of the legislation there was a variance between what the bill says and what the agreement was, so he might have said it was his intention, having studied it and discussed it with his colleagues, to move certain amendments. That is, I suggest, what the minister should have done.

This is the situation and the minister can drag all the red herrings he wants to into it.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Will you answer the question now, please.

Mr. Baldwin: I have answered the question. The minister knows the answer as well as I do. He has been afraid to submit the bill to the provinces to secure their reaction to it before he brought it in for second reading. I want to serve notice on the minister now that it will be a different ball game than it was last winter when he piloted through the House the bill dealing with energy allocation. At that time the minister introduced at the committee stage a very pernicious document which we did not accept then but which, having expressed our disapproval, we did not challenge as we should have to the point of not letting the bill go through the committee. What was employed at that time was the doctrine I call the Macdonald doctrine in respect of committee hearings. Witnesses who appear before any committee who are related to the department and who are, in any sense, advisory to the minister can give only such evidence as may be approved by the minister. They must be under the minister's control while giving evidence.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): What about ministerial responsibility?

Mr. Baldwin: In the case of this minister, it is ministerial irresponsibility. He is the most irresponsible minister in this government and that is saying a good deal. I say through you, Mr. Speaker, that this minister will not get away with that. It is our intention, because of the nuances contained in this bill and the measures proposed in it, to make sure at the committee stage that it receives a most thorough and searching scrutiny. This is our duty. This is the reason we are here. All the thumping and screaming by the minister will not deter us one iota from responding