

Energy Supplies Emergency Act

ly trying to divide the country rather than unite it, in order to reign, that being the only way for them to attain power some day, if ever—

Mr. Wagner: You were better with your text.

Mr. Olivier: I don't need it. Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, the proposals in Bill C-236 are reasonable considering the conditions we have to face. I prefer, Mr. Speaker, criticisms at the administrative level or at the political level from one or more provinces, in order that this winter our children will be warm everywhere in Canada.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before I recognize the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte) may I advise the House that pursuant to Standing Order 40 the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard)—Health—Need for increased personnel trained in geriatrics—Government position; the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt)—Disposition of unused portion of George Darby Hospital, Burnaby—Participation by municipal representatives in negotiations; the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp)—Energy—Nuclear reactors and heavy water plants—Date of expansion in western Canada—Possible increase in research and development funds.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

ENERGY SUPPLIES EMERGENCY ACT

MEASURE TO PROVIDE FOR ALLOCATION BOARD, MANDATORY ALLOCATION FOR SUPPLIES AND RATIONING OF CONTROLLED PRODUCTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale) that Bill C-236, to provide a means to conserve the supplies of petroleum products within Canada during periods of national emergency caused by shortages or market disturbances affecting the national security and welfare and the economic stability of Canada and to amend the National Energy Board Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

[Translation]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-236. I certainly do not intend to make a speech similar to the one of the hon. member for Longueuil (Mr. Olivier) who has just

[Mr. Olivier.]

spoken; he managed to do something quite remarkable, that is sticking his tongue in oil. In such a time of crisis and when there is talk about oil shortages, we should not waste any.

Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting to note that the government does not handle major problems till there is a crisis. That is the point I wanted to make at the outset of my remarks. The government's role is to foresee, to give directions, to make sure to meet the people's essential needs such as food, clothing, and housing and, indirectly, fuel and energy. It is, according to the very definition of a government, what it must do. It is therefore stunning to note that at a certain moment there is a crisis, or that there is the possibility of a state of crisis, since the government and the minister did not make us aware in precise terms of the successive situations which were likely to develop in recent months. As a result, we do not know precisely what is going on.

Last week, we had the impression that the oil companies were merely dictating what to do to the minister, whereas it would be the contrary for a responsible government. And last week the minister candidly admitted that the possibility of an emergency was based on reports made to him and not on specific studies and figures which could be used to assess the situation accurately. He went so far as to say that the Montreal storage facilities were completely full and that it was difficult at present to bring too much oil supplies to Montreal since no storage facilities were available. An oil shortage is unthinkable after the price of petroleum products has skyrocketed.

• (1700)

We are told that regular oil supplies to Quebec will raise a problem this winter because of ice conditions which will make it difficult for some tankers to reach Montreal. It will not be the first time in 1973 that we have a winter in Canada. How is it that this problem did not exist last year or the previous year? How is it that it is only in 1973 that there are transportation problems because of winter conditions? And yet, the minister simply told us that the transportation of winter supplies will be difficult because of ice conditions.

One would think that they want us to freeze and to stay icebound. I think the government has a policy of trial and error, a hit and miss policy, a policy dictated by high finance, so that for the last few months and weeks we have been paying extravagant prices for products that did not cost one cent more than six months or a year ago.

It is our duty to denounce this situation and to show to the people, as mentioned in yesterday's motion, that the government has proven that its policy of the last few weeks is totally inconsistent.

Should we therefore carry on with an energy policy that does not take into account any of the basic elements of any government policy? It is to be wondered whether this is an artificially created shortage designed merely to increase prices. It would be shocking, Mr. Speaker, if such were the case and yet, to date, nobody has been able to state that there was a shortage. And how could they when our own country is an oil producer? How could they when the circumstances which led to the present international oil crisis have hardly anything to do with us? Because in fact,