

plates tampering with a piece of legislation as eminently good as that governing the National Energy Board. That is not to say there are not improvements that could be made to it.

I commend my friend from Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell) on two things; first, his excellent article in *Maclean's* and, second, for the time and the thought—

Mr. Waddell: I didn't write it.

Mr. Simmons: He did not write it. It is not the kind of thing you would admit to anyway. Second I commend him for the time and the thought that must have gone into an exercise of the magnitude represented in this. I believe in all sincerity that this exercise, which allows us to debate an issue of substance, is a very important part of this parliament. I commend the hon. member in that regard.

I was particularly interested in a couple of the concepts he was espousing. One of them was the "sunlight" provision which has all kinds of connotations, not only for our Tory friends but for others. I find it an interesting concept. It has the potential of becoming an important concept. I wish he would have devoted a little more time to informing the House and the general public about it. He might want to pursue that subject on some other occasion.

I have to say that I may not perhaps have thoroughly understood the full implications of the concept, but that part which I heard the hon. member expound I am not sure should be addressed in that particular way or handled through the mechanism of an amendment to the Energy Board Act. It might more properly be addressed in relation to freedom of information legislation. The government has made a commitment to have that legislation in place. Once that is done, the changes the hon. member talks about may well flow directly from the provisions of that legislation. Alternatively, at that point in time it may be necessary to address ourselves to the existing legislation to ensure that not only is the letter of the law of the freedom of information being observed, but the spirit of the new legislation as well.

The other point I want to respond to has to do with consulting the provinces. This government, and, I submit, the government which preceded it under the leadership of the hon. gentleman from Yellowhead (Mr. Clark), have not been remiss in terms of consulting provincial governments. I am not being semantic, but I take it the hon. member meant consultation with the provincial government administration.

I use this opportunity to make a very important distinction, one that should not be construed as merely semantic. I believe we do ourselves a disservice in this national Parliament when we talk about consulting the provinces. I say to the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway, the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mrs. Mitchell), the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and the hon. member for Richmond-South Delta (Mr. Siddon), to name the entire opposition in the House at this time, the proportions are right in terms of the quality of opposition on that side, a three to one decision almost any day of the week. One Tory is on this side. I must say he does not look at all out of place. We welcome the hon.

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member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson). We are glad for the increase in our numbers.

As I was saying, we do ourselves a disservice when we talk about consulting the provinces as meaning consulting the provincial governments. We in this chamber are the provinces. However, we are not the provincial governments. That distinction needs to be articulated. The provincial governments have a mandate and the federal government has a mandate. The Fathers of Confederation recognized in 1864 that certain problems ought to be addressed by a federal government and others by a provincial government.

We in this House represent the provinces. I represent the people of Newfoundland and Labrador just as much as the premier of that province, only on different matters. I represent them in matters of federal jurisdiction and he in matters of provincial jurisdiction. The Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Trudeau) represents the people of Newfoundland and Labrador just as much as the premier does; the Prime Minister in matters of federal jurisdiction and the premier in matters of provincial jurisdiction.

The hon. member for Richmond-South Delta represents the people of British Columbia in federal matters as does any provincial cabinet minister on provincial matters. That distinction is not made enough. We allow the premiers and those at the provincial level to give the impression that they are the custodians of everything that resides in the geographical extremities or definition of a particular province when we in this Parliament, aside from the vacancies, normally 282 people, are spokesmen for the two territories and ten provinces of Canada in matters of federal jurisdiction.

I do not think anyone can argue with my hon. friend that any matter is as all-pervasive in its implications as energy policy and energy decisions. It ought to be addressed with the full consultation of anybody or any administration on which it might impact. I invite the hon. member to reflect on this past summer. The federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) spent a fair amount of time consulting with Mr. Leitch, the Alberta energy minister. The Prime Minister consulted with the Premier of Alberta. It is not really germane to talk about the atmosphere of those negotiations, their success or otherwise. The point I am making is that in recent weeks and months this government has shown its willingness to consult, consult, and consult again.

They had dialogue with the governments of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta on matters that are germane to everyone in this House. Surely there has not been a lack of consultation. In the spirit in which we have operated in this country for the past 113 years, we should not need to legislate consultation. There is no point in doing that. As a matter of course, before you do a job, it requires consultation. Indeed, if I had one criticism of the government's process in Canada over the past few years, it is that we have carried consultation between orders of government too far. I like the word "orders" rather than "levels." I do not see any government as being senior to another government. I see it as having separate assignments from other governments. I am talking