

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD***[English]***CORPORATE SHAREHOLDING LIMITATION ACT****INQUIRY RESPECTING CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES**

**Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Madam Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs as a follow-up to questions directed by my Leader yesterday to the same Minister. The Minister will recall that in yesterday's exchange he was asked why Bill S-31 was presented to the Senate and not to the House of Commons, and whether that matter could be discussed.

In view of the consternation the Bill is creating among the people whom it will directly affect, namely, the people of the provinces of Canada, I would like to ask the Minister whether there was any consultation with regard to the nature and spirit of Bill S-31 prior to its presentation in the Senate. Additionally, in view of the consternation which has developed with regard to Bill S-31, could he tell us whether he has held any consultation with the provinces subsequent to the time it was introduced in the Senate, and whether he could report on such consultation, if it took place?

*[Translation]*

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I do not know what consternation the Hon. Member is referring to. In fact, I believe this bill has been well received by all business circles across Canada. I also think that has been the case among the provinces, which clearly recognize the primacy of the Canadian Government in the transportation sector covered in this bill.

*[English]*

**Mr. Epp:** Madam Speaker, I do not think the Minister would really want to follow up by saying that it was well received by business, or that he would want to leave the impression that the provinces are in agreement with Bill S-31, nor is anyone arguing about primacy. What a person is arguing about here concerns the co-operative federalism which the Prime Minister once declared dead and tried to resurrect two weeks ago, and which now the Minister, by his actions, is saying is of little consequence in practical terms for the Government. That is the issue.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**APPLICATION TO HYDROELECTRIC LINES**

**Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher):** I would like to ask the same Minister a supplementary question with regard to the legislation which goes into the transportation aspects and what he calls the federal primacy, and no one is arguing that point. For example, hydroelectric lines are not directly mentioned in the Bill and are not dealt with as being pipelines. However, the Minister has referred to Part III of the National Energy Act which in fact includes hydroelectric lines. Are hydro lines included under the provisions of the Bill? Are hydro lines

which are to be used for the purpose of exporting electrical energy to another country, included in the Bill as they are in Part III of the National Energy Act?

*[Translation]*

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I may remind the hon. member that our reasons for introducing this legislation were to prevent any future conflicts with the provinces. We thought it was vital to act now, in order to prevent any erroneous interpretations or being obliged to correct situations that might arise later on. To my knowledge, we have had no reactions to the bill, except for one from a minister. Only one provincial minister has commented to date on the bill and that was the Minister of Transport from Quebec. I do not know whether the hon. member has received instructions from the Parti Québécois to ask questions in the House today, but as far as I know, that is the only government that has reacted to the bill until now.

We do not want any fights with the provinces. That is certainly not our intent. The bill clearly establishes the rules for the future and safeguards the primacy of the federal government in this area in clear and carefully defined terms. The hon. member asked a specific question regarding power transmission lines. I may point out that if he reads the bill carefully, he will find that these lines are not affected by the bill. If he wants us to add an amendment, this will be considered at the appropriate time.

• (1420)

*[English]***REQUEST THAT MINISTER CONSULT PROVINCES**

**Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Madam Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the Minister, whose defence is personal attack. He can do that, but if it is the level to which he has to resort, it is, of course, just the voice of the desperate. We will leave it at that.

The Minister says he wants no fight with the provinces and that he wants to avoid any future difficulty. He knows that the legislation can be made retroactive through court action, however. The Minister knows that, so what is he trying to prevent? He says it is not directed at the provinces, but it is, whether one wants to talk about Northlands Rail, about B.C. Rail, or about the transportation system in the potash industry—the list goes on and on.

When will the Minister sit down with the provinces to look at these specific issues, if he says he does not want any fight and wants co-operative federalism? He knows very well that what he has embarked upon is the very fight that he claims to want to prevent.

**Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member could ask this question a dozen times. In his first question he indicated that there was consternation; there is none, Madam Speaker. Only