

barrels of oil per day are required for eastern Canada, and if the price differential is as great as it appears to be, say around \$3 a barrel, then even a partial subsidy of \$1 a barrel will mean a total of \$365 million per year. If that is the effect this will have on eastern Canada and our national budget, I cannot help but wonder where the administration was, in not being able to foresee the situation, and why in heaven's name it did not build the Montreal pipeline a year ago when it had been given every indication by people who knew, including the much maligned Premier of Alberta, that this situation was likely to occur.

Although it is easy to point the finger at this side of the House and say it was the Tories who implemented the so-called Ottawa Valley line, surely in fairness it must be said that economic and social conditions have changed tremendously in the last 11 or 12 years. When the Prime Minister said on September 4—and he has made at least two subsequent pronouncements—that the pipeline is going to be built, surely that was one of the greatest obviousities ever uttered by a prime minister. Of course it must be built. I only wonder why it was not built a long time ago as conditions changed and the industry evolved. I see that the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) is in the chamber. He, too, knows that what is aggravating the energy crisis is a transportation problem, a distribution problem. And while this is understandable, I think it is more forgivable than the omission by the government to take the ordinary preventive step of building the pipeline. Surely this is so obvious that it is incredible that the government did not do it.

But returning to the transportation aspect, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the priorities in this nation are such that if we move any great amount of petroleum products it will seriously interfere with badly needed facilities to move other basic commodities such as wheat, apples, lumber and any number of things that have to be moved. To impose this burden on our transportation system at this time makes it difficult to understand how it can be done.

It seems pretty clear that the Prime Minister in imposing this policy is not to be criticized so much for doing one thing or doing another thing as for being inconsistent in what he is doing. At least the NDP policies on this matter are fairly clear. They would like to see the petroleum industry brought under government control as much as possible. That is their policy; and whether we agree or disagree with it, at least in this regard they have been fairly consistent. But the Prime Minister and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources have not been consistent. They have been saying one thing at one time and another thing at another time. And regardless of whether or not you agree with them, if one is to respect them and give them credit for having the courage of their convictions, one has great difficulty in doing so when one looks at the contradictory and rather inconsistent policies they have been advocating.

When the Prime Minister talks about conditions in eastern Canada he is not being consistent. I well remember, as the newest member of this House when I came to Ottawa in 1971, that the very first question I asked in this chamber was of the Prime Minister. He had just come back from the Victoria conference. I asked whether the ques-

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tion of offshore mineral rights had been on the agenda or had been discussed. As I recall his answer, the right hon. gentleman indicated that it was not on the agenda but there had been something done about it. Since that time I and other members from eastern Canada have asked him what he intends to do to resolve the impasse between the eastern provinces and the federal government, which was actively impeding and which continues to impede the exploration which oil companies must undertake if they are to build up our reserves.

In my opinion, the Prime Minister has tried to put the onus back on the provinces, but the Premier of Nova Scotia has been very quick to put the onus back on the Prime Minister. The latest announcement indicates that there will be an early resolution of this impasse. I am very skeptical, and hon. members will have to be a little indulgent with me because I see no reason, based on the past policies of the government, to suggest that either the federal administration or, for that matter, the province of Nova Scotia, is taking steps at this moment that will finally cure this ridiculous situation which, at a time of national energy crisis, is impeding the search for the very substance we require so desperately in that part of Canada.

This debate is on Bill C-236 and, while I understand it is not proper to go into the bill clause by clause at this time, I would like to deal with some of its provisions in a general way. In this regard I would like to say at the outset that I see no reason for any member to withhold support of the bill provided the government is willing to modify some of the very sweeping and almost dictatorial and coercive powers that are embodied in it. I have not had much time to read the bill, but from the cursory way that I have been able to go through and compare it with another piece of legislation brought forward by this government, Bill C-181, commonly known as the War Measures Act, I find they have quite a bit in common. Just as the War Measures Act, in retrospect I think, is universally regarded as one of the sorriest aspects of civil liberties in this country, I feel I am not being unfair when I ascribe the feeling to the government that if they had to do it over again they would not invoke this type of measure. I think they are indulging in the same type of overkill when they try to persuade members to pass this legislation, Bill C-236. I think it is obvious that because of the government's neglect it is necessary, if not desirable, to give them the power to allocate and ration, but I cannot see why it is necessary to have the tremendous, sweeping powers that they are asking for in this piece of legislation.

● (2020)

We have just finished a major debate on Bill C-132, the foreign investment review act, and in that piece of legislation we were given a very good example of how intransigent the government has been when it comes to giving the provinces of this country some sort of consultation in deciding their own destinies and in dealing with some things that under the BNA Act may be under their exclusive jurisdiction in less troubled times if time were taken for a judicial determination.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation transcends or makes a nullity of some major bills. It supercedes the National Energy Board Act; it appears to super-