

Energy Supplies Emergency Act

Over the last ten years there has been hardly a statute that does not extend to governments, to the executive, additional and at times extreme arbitrary and uncontrolled right of decision-making. Any minor crisis is exaggerated into a major one and cheered on by the sychophantic elements in the media which support the government, and by small groups with special interests such as is the case with this bill. We find that the answer is more and more power to the cabinet. Today the political parliamentary coalition of the Liberal and New Democratic parties makes them more ideologically committed to the cause of more power to the executive, and it is left to this party and to those amongst the media who perceive the danger to attempt to halt the onrush.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: As a result, parliament has been weakened when it should be a significant influence in political life. Because of this, the political system is not able to permit the people, through their representatives, to adequately challenge bad legislative proposals. I expected it of the government, I expected it of the NDP, and in the last year or so I have come to expect it of the large corporations. I begin to find more and more that their interests lie in heavy domination and control by the executive. What saddens me to some extent is the way in which a number of other people who do not perceive this danger cheer on the government taking unto itself these powers. Let us not deceive ourselves: when you give this power to a government, it is not readily taken away.

For these reasons, while this bill is passing—it will become law when the other place has dealt with it—I wanted to use this opportunity to point out the dangers which I and my party see in the methods which have been adopted and in some of the terms of the bill which, without the safeguards which we have tried to secure, will become law probably some time today.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I want to say just a few things in respect of the proposals within this bill. I think the bill does not meet the real need for a Canadian policy on energy. It seeks to allocate one element in the Canadian power and energy equation. Equally important is another element, namely, electricity and how it is generated, by water power or by atomic energy. I wonder why, in its approach to this problem, the government takes the attitude in respect of oil that it can protect the needs of Canadians for that vital source of energy by the simple act of setting up a board which will allocate supplies. The government seems to believe that this is sufficient.

If I understood the minister correctly, he said that the internal price of oil will follow the export price, so that the price will be left to the international market. In the coming discussions with the provinces the government will attempt to influence or to manage the price at which the producer provinces will sell their oil. What we should be concerned about is an assurance by the government that we can supply the needs of Canadians in their homes, in their factories, in their farms and in their industries. I think that proposal which is before us does not meet that need.

If we really intend to meet the needs of Canadians we should look toward the ownership and control, for example, of the transmission system. If the multinational corporations which purchase fuel from the Middle East can decide somewhere in the Atlantic to turn a ship around and send it to a destination other than the United States or Canada, then I suggest they are the people who decide whether or not we in Canada will get our oil supplies. If the control of a ship decides who gets what is in the ship, then the control of pipelines and transmission lines surely decides who gets what runs through those transmission lines.

This bill does not propose to take over the transmission lines and say how we shall be supplied. I have heard no clear declaration by this government that they intend to build a transmission line across Canada that is wholly within Canada and under Canadian control. So long as our present oil pipeline flows through the United States it is not under our control; those agencies of the U.S. government which regulate oil pipelines will have partial control over our sources of energy and the flow of oil. I have heard no clear, sound statement from the government that it intends to do anything about that situation.

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If we are to protect the interests of Canadians, one of our minimum requirements is a nationally-owned pipeline running within Canadian territory and under our control. That has not been provided and has not been suggested in the last few days of this debate. Somebody says it would take two years to build such a pipeline instead of extending the present pipeline through the United States. It is my experience of Canadians that if they want to do a thing, they can do it and within the requisite time limit. For anyone to suggest that we should allow our fiscal resources to be the deciding factor in whether or not we build such a pipeline is misleading the Canadian people. The only limiting factor is our own will, our own determination.

We should be in a position to say to Shaheen or Imperial Oil, "You will refine this much product, and we will have this much product available for Canadians." Again, the only way to do this effectively is by owning the tools of production. It has surprised me how willing the government has been to put pressure on Saskatchewan and Alberta who are within the Canadian family. It is very willing to do that—

An hon. Member: How about your own colleagues?

Mr. Gleave: —but the government is very reluctant to put the same kind of pressure on those who are outside the Canadian family and who have more control over our destiny through their ownership of sources of energy. It is they who control supplies in vital areas of Canada. Someone asked, how about us. The government of my province has shown a willingness and has even taken action to control energy and the distribution of energy in that province. We own the power lines, we own the gas lines, we own the distribution system.

Recently the province of Saskatchewan moved to control the oil industry. It set out six principles in its statement. The control of oil must be firmly vested in the