

since I am convinced that among the greatest contributors to that faltering of the economy are our government's foibles and fumbles in the energy field that are demonstrated every day. These have been discussed by my colleagues; therefore, I do not have to recite them, and go from Alsands to whatever other things seem to be even worse, Alsands being but one in a string of deep disappointments.

Only a matter of hours ago I read that another setback has taken place, in that we have been disappointed with regard to the expected sale of a Candu to Mexico. There is therefore not very much, honourable senators, to cheer a country which has a government whose pursuit and execution of policies has caused the world around us to abandon faith in the conduct of the Canadian economy.

I have been thinking lately of the last couple of decades. It is just about 20 years ago that the Diefenbaker government was repudiated, lost votes, and was scorned for a 92½ cent dollar. Today what was it? I believe it was 78.22 cents. If anything has happened to the Canadian people in a couple of decades, it is that they have surely learned to endure a great deal, in view of the fact that they would not tolerate a 7 cent difference in those days. What we would like now is to have some of those 92½ cent dollars, if we go to the United States, and have them negotiable. They would be really precious items today.

In all this gloom, how do we appraise Bill C-107? Of it the minister has said that it is just as important as all of the others in the National Energy Program, and perhaps more so. But it is important? Is it necessary?

Looking at the minister's remarks, we might say that it is unimportant and, indeed, unnecessary. I too have the red book, which I think I heard Senator Doody refer to as being the thoughts of "Chairman Marc". At page 51 the minister is reported as saying:

The government has decided that the program will remain voluntary unless companies fail to co-operate.

So as to hammer the point home, the authority to set standards and impose penalties is contained in the act. But the government does not intend that these provisions should be proclaimed. Just having written these sections into the law we hope will be enough to accomplish our goals.

The parliamentary secretary, speaking, I presume, for the government, went on to say that the performance of industry under the voluntary program provides further evidence of success, that the targets for fuel consumption performance have not only been met but have been exceeded to date, and that the expectation is that this trend will continue. He said the willingness and expressed commitment of industry to co-operate with us makes a good case for retaining the voluntary nature of the program.

A humble logician would ask what in the name of heaven would be the necessity of going on further, then. If everything is working well, what is the requirement for quite a substantial chunk of legislation? If everything is good, if everything is

hunky-dory, it might recommend itself to wise and thoughtful people to leave well enough alone.

It might then be expected that if everything is fine, and not much is needed, we could pick up this bill and find that it is a very simple piece of legislation. It is, however, not exactly a gentle augmentation of something that is already working well. It is not exactly what they referred to as enhanced voluntarism; indeed, it is a little more than that. What strikes me about this measure is that a situation that is alleged to be totally satisfactory has produced legislation which will be, if enacted, Draconian. Bill C-107 is a massive bureaucratic web, involving the creation of all kinds of inspectors and record-keepers. A veritable empire will be built upon this bill. We will have a vast network of people checking on what is taking place in a situation which is already well in hand. There is something that is much more dangerous, however, than a bureaucratic network. I am not nearly as afraid of bureaucrats as I am of autocrats, and it is for such people that this bill creates a hey-day. It exalts ministerial authority. It adds dangerous powers.

This is a long bill, and I refer to two clauses only. Clause 3 says:

3. The Governor in Council may, on the recommendation of the Minister and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, make regulations prescribing, for the purposes of section 11, a fuel consumption standard for any prescribed class of motor vehicle for any year.

This is another of these omnibus grants of regulatory power. It is another thrust of unseen sovereignty, a most dangerous thing that Lord Hewart talked about years ago: the new despotism. We have lived to see the new despotism get old.

Far more dangerous than clause 3, however, is clause 37. This is a clause that should be thrown out, should be tossed out, should be discarded, should be deleted, should be defeated. It is one, however, that gives to the Senate of Canada an opportunity to show itself as the guardian of our people. It reads as follows:

37. The Governor in Council may, on the recommendation of the Minister, make regulations

(a) prescribing anything that is by this Act to be prescribed;—

That is almost authority to turn day into night and the end into the beginning.

(b) respecting such other matters or things as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

No minister should have that kind of power in any parliamentary democracy, and certainly not in ours. Please note that these two provisions are in a bill which arises from the situation which is alleged by the minister to be quite hunky-dory.

I would say that in this time of stress and strain, where everything that the minister seems to put his hand to makes him a King Midas in reverse, it would be better to let this