

When the mines ministers met in December, 1974, nine out of the ten mines ministers of the provinces, led by the mines minister of the province of Quebec, opposed the bill and the minister had to hold it up so they could consult with the provinces whose resources they were stealing. In mentioning that to the House I direct my remarks particularly at members of the Liberal party who, after the results last night, must be wondering what is wrong.

You cannot safely attack the basic principles of this country unless you know what makes the people tick. What makes the people of rich resource provinces like Newfoundland and Quebec angry is that they sense that this government is constantly attacking the powers and taking the wealth of the provinces, trying to centralize them. I do not find any difference on this issue between the Liberals and the NDP; both believe they know better than the people how to run this country.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gilbert: Poor Alvin; he cannot understand the difference.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): I love to hear the suckers roar. This is one example, along with this bill, of an attack upon the federal system. Many members have been around here long enough to remember what happened in 1974 when we had a budget in the spring and a budget in the fall. We called them the Turner budgets. The Turner budget in the spring and the Turner budget in the fall were attacks on the basic foundations of our federal system. The government has a majority in this House—but not across the country—and feels it represents all the Canadian people. It feels it has the right to take away the wealth of provincial governments and their people. Sooner or later, Mr. Speaker, when that budget is overturned, it will be safe for Mr. Turner to come back into the House. But until it is, he will not come back because he knows that in those budgets of his of 1974 he attacked the basic economic foundations of all provinces.

I mention these points because this bill pretends to appeal to us to do something that we have to do, namely, reduce government expenditures. But when you read the speech of the Minister of Transport it is apparent this is not just a one-year shot. He knows that if he gets rid of section 272 of the Railway Act he will blast the people east of Montreal, because this bill affects only those east of Montreal. Let me read to hon. members section 272 since it is important not only to the Atlantic provinces but to the whole country:

(2) For the purpose of encouraging the continued use of the eastern ports for the export of grain and flour,

(a) rates for grain moving in bulk for export to any eastern port from any inland point over any line of a railway company subject to the jurisdiction of parliament shall be maintained at the level of rates applying on the 30th day of November, 1960, to the movement of such grain to eastern ports—

The rates that we set up as a government in 1960 allowed these ports to be used by the railways not only to keep people in the Atlantic provinces at work but to give us access to markets year-round. This founding principle of the economic

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security of ports east of Montreal is now being attacked in this legislation. They want to repeal section 272, so let me just drive this point home. This bill may be an attempt to pretend that they are cutting back expenses, but it is really part of an over-all program to reduce the power of the provinces and to turn all decision-making over to the government in Ottawa.

If the government was elected to make its own decisions, there could be an argument for it. But the truth is that this government does not run the country. The country is run by a small group of civil servants who seize the decision-making powers in each major department and run the country. They know best and they tell ministers what to say and what to do. I ask all westerners, all people from Quebec and the Atlantic provinces, and all northerners in Ontario, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, to rally to the fact that this attack on the "at and near" rates going to the maritimes is an attack on them all, and I ask them to throw the bill out, and this section in particular.

I have related my remarks to the political situation. It must be abundantly clear that just as once upon a time Saskatchewan and Quebec were the political heartlands of the Liberal party, provinces on which they depended for their massive support to overcome the votes of other provinces and form the government of Canada, today those heartlands are disappearing. The Liberals are pretty well subdued in Saskatchewan and now it looks as if after 90 years of domination in the province of Quebec their heartland there is beginning to shake.

• (1210)

I should like to advise my Liberal friends across the way that Saskatchewan is gone from them, that Quebec is going and it will not be long before they go, too, unless they start taking control of their government. They have the voices of the backbenchers; they can tell the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) what to say and what to think. He will not kick them out. He does not dare. Everybody who has been kicked out comes back. I say to them, "Stand up and express your views."

In 1974 the cattle industry was in trouble. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) asked us to support him in amending the price stabilization act. All parties supported him in the committee. We put it through. Then when the bill went before the cabinet and treasury board, the minister was turned down in respect of the very act he had put through on behalf of all parties, the Liberals, the Progressive Conservatives, the New Democrats and the Cr ditistes. We know who runs this country. It is not those on the back benches—but the people in the back benches have the chance to stand up. I think their Prime Minister will listen today. He was an angry man last night when he realized that one cannot, by propaganda, fight the whole country. Some people will stand up against that kind of thing.

I say to members opposite, "Put the fear of God in your Prime Minister and speak up for these areas—the northern part of Quebec, the northern part of Ontario, the Atlantic provinces and the far north. Speak up, because this is the basis of our federal system." I do not want to embellish the point