

*Transportation*

right hon. Prime Minister and the premier of Quebec.

Now, we know that, in fact, for a hundred years now, the central government has left to the provinces legislation and regulation in the field of motor vehicle transport. Indeed, a federal act passed in 1954 even recognized the practice. This act entitled Motor Vehicle Transport Act confirmed this; sections 3 and 4 sanctioned the agreements whereby the central government left to the provinces legislation and regulation in that field.

Today, through Bill No. C-231, the central government wishes to recover its constitutional authority. That is clear to me. But what a way to go about it, Mr. Speaker. The province of Quebec has legislated, has instituted a system of rules and regulations, and now the federal government wishes to retrieve, with a view of placing them under the Canadian Transport Commission, the modes of transport by air, water, truck and pipeline as well as by motor vehicle.

The central government has a right to have such a philosophy, but its approach to the problem is to be rejected. After letting the provinces, including Quebec, legislate and regulate on the matter for so many years, the federal government, before bringing in such legislation, should have had discussions, and consultations, in the precise spirit of the letter that the right hon. Prime Minister wrote on August 4. Instead of making such meetings possible, of discussing for the very purpose of making this return, this recovery, possible and instead of negotiating certain areas on which the provinces have a right to continue to legislate, such as the issue of licenses, traffic control, in a word, several areas of the trucking field, the central government, by the way it proceeded, had its legislation all concocted at the time they wrote a letter, as a matter of form, to the premiers of the provinces.

Such a procedure is insulting, harmful, and does not contribute anything toward solving the problem uniformly or restoring proper balance in the trucking industry across Canada. Furthermore, the procedure is wrong and protests recently lodged by the Quebec government and the Quebec leader of the opposition are warranted; as a matter of fact, I think they should be repeated here in this house to show the government and the minister that it is not good procedure to put the cart before the horse.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pickersgill:** May I ask the hon. gentleman a question? Has the hon. gentleman taken into account that the Prime Minister in his correspondence and I in the house have said quite clearly, that the government had no intention whatsoever of transferring the application of this jurisdiction from the provincial agencies acting as agents of the federal government until after the fullest consultation with the provincial governments, that all we are doing here is providing stand-by powers in case certain actions of the courts leave us without any law whatsoever, as we were left without any law whatsoever in 1954? All this was carefully explained.

I wonder whether the hon. gentleman has taken those explanations into account? If he has, does he see any reason for this parliament not exercising its clear and undoubted jurisdiction, which he admitted it had?

● (1:30 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Allard:** Mr. Speaker, the minister has just made a point that cannot in any way be reconciled with the argument I was developing. Of course, the minister is repeating the same assurances that were given in the correspondence with the premier of the province of Quebec. Well, all the assurances given by this government are such that they are likely to cause concern to the Quebec government.

And how funny it was yesterday, in this house, to hear the Minister of Transport state, with the zest for which he is famous, that no member in this house was more mindful than he of the respect of the letter and spirit of the Canadian constitution. I found that statement extremely amusing, Mr. Speaker. And it is certainly not the kind of statement which the minister made yesterday and seems willing to repeat today which will dissolve all our fears about the letter and the spirit of the Canadian constitution which the minister and the present government are claiming to respect. As a matter of fact, that commitment is not borne out by the facts in this session or particularly during the last two years the present Liberal government has been in office. Mr. Speaker, the minister has assured us during this session that no other hon. member has more respect than he has for the spirit and the letter of the Canadian constitution, but he is a member of a government which has presented to us bills which are absolutely contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Canadian constitution.