

\$10. Parliament is being asked to delegate authority to the government in order to continue to impose a charge at a level which the government will select shortly before the federal-provincial conference which is being called, as I understand it, to work out a package of problems—a number of which were referred to by the Minister of Finance today—relating to a real oil policy involving some of the considerations he mentioned, as well as federal leadership and full provincial participation.

We are being asked, just before this conference is convened, to delegate this power to tax to this government. This tax is only one element, although it is obviously important in terms of the money involved, in the package of proposals which the government proposes to discuss with the provinces. It is only one element in what must constitute a meaningful national oil policy which the federal government hopes to work out with the provinces. This package must include various elements. It surely has to include a future pricing policy for Canadian domestic crude. We were told by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in December that the freeze would be kept on domestic crude until the end of the heating season. We were told that this would be determined at the forthcoming federal-provincial conference. However, the Prime Minister has given no indication of what the pricing policy will be for Canadian crude following the termination of the freeze. That, obviously, is an important element in a national oil policy.

Mr. Sharp: What are you suggesting?

Mr. Stanfield: Just take it easy.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): We want to hear the hon. gentleman's policy.

Mr. Paproski: Just listen and you will find out.

● (1600)

Mr. Stanfield: I am very pleased to note that the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Sharp) and the Minister of Finance seem to be seriously disturbed by their lack of policy.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The Minister of Finance also recognized today—and this is the first time any minister in this House has recognized it—the importance of reducing the disparity between prices paid for imported crude and prices paid for domestic crude. Heretofore the Prime Minister and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources have said, "This is just something that happens. It worked the other way for quite a long time. After all, we have a very generous Canada Assistance Plan. We will share 50 per cent with the eastern provinces; that will help them out a lot." That was a totally inadequate response.

My point at the moment—I will develop it as I go along—is that the Minister of Finance stressed today the importance of working under a one-price policy. I say we must not wait until 1980 to have a one-Canadian market principle which the Prime Minister talked about early in December. If we have to wait until 1980 to get something approaching equality, something approaching a one-price principle, maybe not exactly the same but something the

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country can live with, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces will be so deeply entrenched in economic disparity that what we have seen in the past will be nothing by comparison.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: I was pleased to hear the Minister of Finance emphasize this today. However, there is still no precision. All that is precise is what the government wants to tax. There is not a bit of information about a pricing policy which of course is clearly related to the amount the tax would actually be and very closely related to consumer interests. There is nothing specific about measures to be taken to reduce the pricing disparity. These are things I presume the government will put before the conference in a serious and specific way.

During the recess I was pleased to hear that the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is beginning to recognize the urgent problems resulting from the price disparity faced by the five eastern provinces. This has been apparent to me and to others for a number of months. We expressed this position in the debate on December 10 and frequently repeated it after that, almost to the jeers of members of the government and members supporting the government. I was delighted to see today the reversal in principle of the Minister of Finance. I do not think it would be an exaggeration to refer to it as a new "Turner Valley find".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Following the Prime Minister's statement of position, I said that the position taken by this government toward the five eastern provinces was a savage policy. It certainly was. I am pleased to see that it is being abandoned, at least in principle. However, I would like to know what the government really proposes to do about it. It is not good enough for the government to come before this House and ask for the right to impose taxes at its discretion without telling us the rest of what it proposes to do.

Mr. Foster: What do you propose?

Mr. Stanfield: What a question! I said as emphatically as I could that the disparity which existed the other way to the extent of 50 cents or a dollar a barrel is something that can be lived with, but we cannot live with the kind of distortion we have at present. I said that as emphatically as I could; I do not know what I can say to get it through the hon. member's head.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Let the government put before the House its package, not just its tax proposal. Let it put before the House its package with regard to the pricing policy of Canadian crude and imported crude. These are all questions that surely must be answered before anyone in good conscience could support this part of the bill. The minister talked about the purpose of the bill. What is the purpose of the bill? Is it to raise revenue? Is it to provide the government with the tool to help it control domestic prices? I would like to know the purpose of the bill. This is funda-