

Oil and Petroleum

ment will have a difficult time in keeping the country together, having it as a meaningful federation where wealth and opportunities can be distributed to help all regions. If the federal government does this sort of thing with only certain industries, it will have the premiers down on its neck. They will naturally be concerned because there will not be balanced growth and balanced development. Unless the government changes direction, we are in for some real trouble in the years to come.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Chairman, I take pleasure in rising to speak on this topic. We are not simply discussing the matter of oil but the right of future Canadians to design their own destiny. Last week I listened to a half hour speech by the Prime Minister which he recycled twice. He discussed what he said was the policy of how best to serve the Canadian people. Over and over in that speech one word kept ringing out. That word was "control". It was not so much the concern of the Prime Minister or of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources about what is best for the Canadian people but rather about whom will control the resources of the provinces in the future. Control is the operative word on the government side of the House at this time. This is the concern of the central government.

I believe in a strong central government. If we are going to have an orderly dispatch of business in Canada, we must have a strong central government. What I fear is a pervasive strong central government, a government that is not only strong but moves into areas that up to this time have been the concern of the provinces.

When the government takes it upon itself to move into the area of taxing energy in this country, it is moving into an area rightfully belonging to the provinces. We have to fear this kind of pervasive strong central government which moves into areas not hitherto considered within its purview.

There may be two possible reasons why the government feels justified in doing this at this time. First, it thinks it has the right to do it. If the government feels it has the right to move into the energy resource field at this time, it has already decided it has jurisdiction over offshore resources.

The west coast and the east coast have another resource. That is the fishing industry. Here is a resource which the federal government has already indicated it has the right to control. Does the minister in the future intend to exercise control in that particular industry which is one of our vital natural resources on our east and west coasts? Is the minister prepared to project himself into the future and foresee a time when he wants to control that particular industry? The minister is not listening. He does not want to answer that question, so I will move on.

This pervasiveness of the government is characterized by that very homey, heartwarming, almost heartrending phrase which the Prime Minister and the minister talked about, "benefits for all Canadians." That always sounds so appealing. It has a paternalism about it, a care and a concern. I would like the minister to describe how this works in with co-operative federalism.

Paternalism always carries with it an aura of social concern. It has the ring, but not the heart of social con-

[Mr. Nystrom.]

cern. The heart of social concern allows people the dignity to choose for themselves. That is precisely what the government is cutting off with this measure.

How can we talk about social concern for all the people of Canada when we take away from them the right to decide the destiny of their natural resources? If the government is really concerned about benefits for all Canadians, it will let the government of each province decide what is right for its people.

Let the government of each province distribute the benefits of the natural resource of that province. After all, it is closest to the needs of its people. Provincial governments know the needs of senior citizens and the deprivations of their people. Let them distribute the benefits of their natural resources. The provincial governments are a little closer to the scene. They know a little bit more about the needs of their provinces. In this way the benefits of these natural resources would be distributed to all Canadians.

The problem is that the benefits will not go to all Canadians if this government is handling them. Chances are they will go to ever-expanding Canada Council grants, LIP programs and bureaucracies. That is where the benefits will go. If the benefits actually went to those who need them most, we could see some sense in what the government is proposing at this time. Far be it from me to want to take away this kind of resource from the benefit of all Canadians. If we had that kind of assurance, we would be loathe to thwart the government in that area.

● (2150)

This kind of paternalistic control is wrong because the government is incompetent to handle the situation, if the report of the National Energy Board is to be believed. We recognize that the government is not ready to handle our natural resources. We recognize that the government is not handling with competence the resources which are already available to us. How can we entrust to it the resources of the future? The government is at fault in even bringing this bill forward. This legislation asks us to disregard the needs of our people by moving into an area which is far better left to the provinces.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): In my efforts to understand the import of this particular bill, I spent a fair amount of time going through it carefully and I have broken it down into its various components. The bill is divided into five parts. The first three clauses are preceded by paragraphs. They are designated first, as Short Title; then Interpretation, as is normal, after which we come to clause 3. I think it would be useful if I were to read clause 3 into the record:

This Act is binding on Her Majesty in right of Canada and in right of any province.

Hon. members will see that it is short, but to the point. I was struck by the words of this particular clause. In fact I could not believe that parliament would ever be asked to consider such a provision in this context. Disallowance has gone out of style, but we have now invented something else which is called an override. Clause 3 appears in this bill to override any regulation which a province might bring into force in this area.