

*Order of Business*

after Canada; we do not need Petro-Canada. We are prepared to go with the multinationals to sort out Canada's problems." That position was put forward by the official critic for the Conservative party.

I am going to deal with the International Energy Agency and the Importance of Petro-Canada being part of the standing group on emergency questions at the International Energy Agency. The first amendment we dealt with a few moments ago was opposed by the official opposition. The official opposition did not want Petro-Canada to be the watchdog for Canada at the standing group on emergency questions in the International Energy Agency.

● (1650)

I talked about the opposition's relaxed attitude. That is something we have seen emerge in this debate, evidenced by their saying "let the multinationals do it" and their not being prepared to face up to pricing questions. As well it was evidenced by their opposition to Petro-Canada and the whole attitude toward the importance of getting this bill through and getting it through quickly.

Another issue in the debate, part of the official opposition's position, was that the government was asking for too much power. The official opposition said there was no emergency and that there would not be an emergency. Therefore, we could take all the time we wanted even though we will be facing an election without the powers to deal with one.

Let us look at some opposition charges. Most of those charges seem to be based on taking at face value a particular presentation made to the committee by the Ontario government, a presentation which examination has proved was based on a whole series of false premises and assumptions. It was one of the most shoddy pieces of work ever presented before a parliamentary committee. It was not based on any objective seeking for the truth. It was based, as I indicated in a public statement, on some misguided effort to try to embarrass the government. One can only speculate why the Conservative government of Ontario—perhaps itself in some difficulty with energy questions in Ontario—would take this moment to try to shift the limelight away from themselves and place it on us. As a result of that shoddy piece of work and inept presentation on the part of the spokesman for the Ontario government, upon examination of the case it seems the Ontario government has come out very much second best.

I regret the official energy critic for the Conservative party, the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham (Mr. Lawrence), has identified himself so quickly with some of the remarks in that presentation, arguments which suggested that through this bill the Government of Canada could bankrupt the gas transmission distribution system in Canada. That was the position of the Ontario government. However, the testimony placed before the committee clearly indicated that there are measures, protections and appeal mechanisms which can prevent any kind of arbitrary move. I believe that case has been made and made convincingly. I wait to hear whether we will

still hear that again from the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham.

The leader of the debate from the opposition side showed no readiness or willingness to look at the way the powers which the government was seeking in this bill could be controlled by parliament or how those powers would be made available and published in the form of amendments to allocation programs or orders dealing with mandatory allocation.

I believe it was the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) who put his finger on it best when he said that it was quite clear that the amendments introduced by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and supported by the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham, the energy critic for the Tory party—which did not come to a vote because after a while I suspect the Tories became embarrassed by the nature of them—were designed to subvert the intentions of the act. If these amendments had been accepted by this House they would have so cut and emasculated—to use the words of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) in some of his remarks—the administrative process that it would be impossible to deal with the emergency which this particular bill is designed to cope with in the event an emergency comes about. God hopes it does not, but let us be safe rather than sorry.

That has not been the attitude of the official opposition. As I have indicated, the position of the official opposition is to recognize no urgency. They do not recognize that the administration is complex or that it will be dealing with hundreds of thousands of separate transactions. It will be dealing with particular regions, and regional aspects differ from place to place in this great country. There is no recognition that priorities may be changed through the advice of the provinces. There has been no recognition that certainty is needed in the administration of emergency measures. The Tory opposition closed its eyes and stuck its head in the sand when it came to deal with this bill. Its intelligence has been covered up because it has been buried in the sand.

I have indicated that there is a provision for parliamentary approval after a declaration has been announced. There is provision in the act which requires that orders and amendments to orders be tabled before parliament so that Canadians may know what the emergency supplies allocation board is doing. I would be the first to recognize that there are very significant powers associated with this board. But when one is dealing with an emergency and something as strategic as energy on which our whole economy depends, surely it would be foolhardy not to provide the necessary powers and flexibility, and indeed, as we have, the necessary process of parliamentary approval, so that the job can be done.

There was a charge of a degree of unfairness somehow or other introduced into the administrative process, and no recognition that this possible unfairness could be redressed. Answers to those charges were also placed on the record and set out in detail during committee stage.

In the balance of my remarks I would like to deal with the International Energy Agency and the part it may have in