

Energy Supplies Emergency Act

have authority to be able to take the measures outlined in the bill in order to protect the Canadian consumer.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with interest to the minister, as have all members of the House, and I am sure the country will be listening to what he has had to say. I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, and through you the members of this House, that what strikes me about the over-all approach taken by the minister is the light, almost casual touch that he gave to this request he is making to the House for these tremendous powers. I wonder why the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen), when doing his bargaining this afternoon, did not ask for the bill to be passed without any debate at all. He might well have done so in view of the attitude the minister has taken.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Well, if the hon. gentleman is agreeable . . .

Mr. Baldwin: The minister talked about an insurance policy, but if you take out an insurance policy you want to know in some detail what the risks are. You want to know what premium you are going to pay. This information was not given to us by this minister of the government, but I intend to go into this aspect, as will my colleagues, to some extent at a later period in our discussion.

I want to make but one other comment at this particular stage regarding what the minister said, though I will deal with other remarks of his as I continue my comments. Although I do not think he intended to do so, I think he quoted the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) out of context. The Leader of the Opposition did not at any time say categorically there would not be any shortage or any problems in respect of supply in this country. What he did say, and you have to take this in context with his questions before and after this statement, was that he was not satisfied with the diverse remarks of the minister and other members of the government, and that there may be in fact very strong discrepancies in respect of these statements regarding this energy problem. It was that which compelled the Leader of the Opposition to seek a more detailed statement in discharging his responsibilities. So far the Leader of the Opposition, hon. members of this House and the country, have not received such a statement.

● (1540)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: Before leaving the question of insurance, and I think Your Honour may have had occasion to deal with insurance law in the days when you did not have to worry about listening to speeches on energy, let me say that when one is dealing with insurance he wants to have some knowledge as to the integrity of the broker.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baldwin: I would be the first to acknowledge that the members of our party have made no attempt to conceal the fact there are difficulties and problems in Canada and in the world. It would be a foolish person who would deny that fact, but these are problems which differ as to kind, as to intensity and as to geographic location. Steps are

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

required to be taken in respect of these problems, but we in this party have never at any time attempted to deny the necessity of taking such steps.

An hon. Member: We have even asked for them.

Mr. Baldwin: As my friend has said, we have asked for them during the question period and in the course of discussions in the committee as well as in the House. We must bear in mind that, as we saw last night, as we have seen today and during this week, there are day to day alterations in these rapidly moving problems both in Canada and in the world. We may well hope that international conditions will settle down, and that there may be a mellowing which will make some difference in this regard, but conditions may in fact worsen. Certainly, no one on this side has attempted to deny that fact, but this does not mean we in this party will be panicked or that we are going to be pushed into granting this authority to the government until we are satisfied beyond any reasonable doubt that the problems are such that they require a cure of the size the minister is asking us to approve. There are other ways of making roast beef than by burning down the cow barn, and this is one of the propositions I should like the minister to keep in mind.

We do not intend to meekly give up the rights of not only ourselves but of other people outside this House.

An hon. Member: Of the oil companies.

Mr. Baldwin: Hon. members in the backbenches over there do not know what they are talking about, because we represent the people of Canada. We have seen what this government does when it is granted unreasonable power and authority, and it is not our intention to tamely give to those people those things they are demanding.

I sometimes think as I look at the minister of those lines of Shakespeare:

Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed,

That he is grown so great?

I think the first thing to do is have a look at this bill which the minister skipped over very casually, simply and easily. I intend to take a little time to look at this measure. It has been before us for a very short time, although I had a few hours to consider it yesterday when I was interrupted by some event in the House of which we are all aware. I want time to look at it and discover precisely what is being asked for as well as what will be the effect if it is passed under the circumstances which exist today. I want more time to look at it to discover what powers the government will have. We will have a look also at the objectives the government seeks, and which I believe the people of Canada seek to achieve in dealing with this energy problem. I want to consider the things upon which the bill is based to see whether there are any alternatives to what is proposed by the government. I want finally to have some discussion and consideration of what we would suggest about the measure and how we should deal with it.

What does the bill do? In the first place there is no question at all that this board with the high sounding name, the Energy Supplies Allocation Board, is in fact government owned, operated and manned. There is no question at all that there is no indication of independence