

Energy Supplies

governor in council and the purposes for which the corporation was established are set out, one of which is to obtain goods and commodities outside Canada. I do not see how that can exclude petroleum.

Section 4(1)(c) reads as follows:

—to exercise on behalf and under the direction of the minister any powers or functions vested in the minister by any other act that authorizes the minister to employ the corporation to exercise them;

In Section 3(2) it states:

The corporation shall comply with any general or special direction given by the governor in council—

An order in council issued by the minister can cause the corporation to do things on behalf of the government with reference to carrying out its purposes. I realize that since the terms and conditions of the act which established Petro-Canada have escaped the minister, this may also have escaped his attention. The point is that for the purpose of securing a supply of imported petroleum from Venezuela, Mexico or wherever, the government has had for a considerable time an ample source of power in the Canadian Commercial Corporation.

The minister comes close to misleading this House of Commons, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gillespie: Oh, no. What a long bow!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): He did not quite mislead the House but he comes close when he advances the theory that it is only through or under the auspices of this corporation that security of supply of imported petroleum can be achieved. If that is the position of the government, then I say the minister is misleading the House because there is ample authority and ample power elsewhere.

The question that Canadians are asking themselves—aside from the existence of an acquisition company of the government—the issue is how, for ten or 12 years, and in the face of an emergency which occurred in 1973, this government has failed to act, so that just prior to a time when we are going to be facing the people of the country they ask for these extraordinary powers to face an emergency which even its most constructive critics indicate does not exist. I would call the attention of the minister to the column in the *Ottawa Journal* this evening by Mr. W. A. Wilson.

We do not deny the government the right to power to allocate in emergencies. We have indicated our position in relation to this bill. We do not like what the government is attempting to do. That is the situation, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to be sure that I was not in any way misinterpreting the thrust of the minister's remarks. If I do, I apologize to him. The minister has come awfully close to misleading the House with reference to these powers to ensure that the oil is there.

Given that situation, where there is authority in the Canadian Commercial Corporation to do this kind of importing, what ought parliament to do about the amendment of the New Democratic Party, which they advanced in accordance with their principles, that Petro-Canada ought to become the sole

[Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton).]

implement for dealing with the situation. That is the purport of the amendment. I suggest a good case has to be advanced, and it has not been advanced thus far, on the question of why the Canadian Commercial Corporation, which has power to act, should be stripped of its power in favour of another corporation. That is a very simple proposition.

The minister dealt with the question of delay. He has an unusually short memory, but it is shorter in regard to this bill than it has ever been before. I think he has forgotten that it was he who called a vote last week on Tuesday, on the first amendment. Had he not done so, he would have paved the way for the consideration of this bill by the end of the week. The minister will recall that the hon. member for Fort William (Mr. McRae) spoke on this amendment on Friday, continuing the debate. I am advised that, in committee, members of the government wasted two days of the proceedings. I have the feeling that there is something about this bill that they want to keep before the House. I would be the last to suggest that it had anything to do with a general election.

The minister said the amendments had been dealt with in committee. He was quite right. I am sure he knows that while a small group of members deal with amendments in committee, under the rules it has always been the right of the House to deal with amendments here, so that members not on the committee can speak to them.

We have the sorry spectacle of a minister at the end of the reign of this government, a government that has neglected the problems of supplying this country with its own fuel, now crying out for help from sources which the minister knows—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his allotted time has expired. He may continue if there is unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, I wish to support the amendment of the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) in view of the fact that we are going to face difficulties in the oil industry. We cannot anticipate what those difficulties will be, but they will come about.

It is appropriate that in this bill Petro-Canada be given the powers for allocation that are suggested. In the interests of the Canadian public, I see no reason for the minister not to agree that Petro-Canada should be given the power to be the sole importer if conditions demand.

● (2020)

This bill has been asked for, in the event of an emergency. The general pattern of our importations should also be considered. There are seven major oil companies that operate in this country.

We have seen Exxon telling Canadian branch plants that because the need in the United States is greater, there will be a shortage of oil for Imperial's customers in Canada. I was surprised to hear the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark)