

Oil and Petroleum

natural gas because of the long-term contracts, the federal government would have to take action pursuant to the regulations to stipulate what the price level would be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, Part V, the next one, is entitled: "General".

Part V confers on the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources the necessary administrative powers to prevent infractions to this Act. These powers include the right to demand information and examine files on the premises, whenever there are reasons to believe that this act has been contravened. In case he is refused, a judge could issue an order to confirm these rights. On the other hand, citizens are entitled to a certain degree of protection against administrative abuses.

Moreover, if requested by the Minister, the Energy Supplies Allocation Board may also review the prices at which domestic oil, foreign oil, oil products and gas are being sold in Canada, and may also submit reports and recommendations to the Minister.

Finally, under Part V, the Minister must submit to Parliament, following each fiscal year, a report on the amount of revenue from the charge imposed pursuant to Part I, and on the aggregate amount of compensation paid out pursuant to Part IV.

● (1550)

[*English*]

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I commend Bill C-32 to the House for its careful consideration and prompt passage. The objectives which it seeks to achieve are for the most part familiar to members as being now well-established components of an integrated national energy policy. The provisions for export charge, import compensation and oil price restraint are essentially as they were in Bill C-18 of the last parliament. Where changes have been made, they reflect experience and knowledge accumulated in the intervening months.

The measures for gas price restraint represent a logical step to deal with the uncertainties of the present gas pricing situation. The provision in part IV, division II for compensation to be paid for emergency movements of oil between Canadian destinations is, I suggest, a prudent provision in the present circumstances of instability affecting the supply of world oil and a necessary complement to measures already taken or contemplated.

Important elements of our oil and energy policy have been endorsed by the consensus of first ministers, although it cannot be fairly represented—and I make the point specifically now—that Alberta agrees with us in the matter of gas pricing. The Alberta ministers indicated that they would, of course, oppose that particular approach. I believe that the direction of our policies has widespread public acceptance. This consensus has in large part been implemented by informal or temporary measures. It is now the responsibility of parliament to give formal expression to its will in these matters as incorporated in Bill C-32 which is the focus for this debate and decision of this question.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain):
Madam Speaker, this is the second time the principle of

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

this bill has been discussed in the House. When the bill was introduced in the last parliament as Bill C-18, we thought it was just to put into legislative form the agreement that the 11 governments made on March 27 last year. Today the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) indicated that some changes had been made in light of the experience of the last four or five months. That means we are into an entirely new ball game, Madam Speaker. What makes it different and new is that what we thought was a temporary measure turns out to be permanent. We thought the previous legislation was just a temporary means of carrying out an agreement reached by the 11 governments, but from the minister's speech today it is obvious that he looks upon this as permanent legislation to control prices on a permanent basis.

It is clear that this permanent measure refers to all products made out of crude oil, out of the tar sands and out of natural gas. The minister kept referring to the fact that this is part of an integrated energy policy, so we must assume that next it will refer to hydro power and after that nuclear power, and so on. So we are dealing with a new situation entirely, Madam Speaker; not the one we thought we were dealing with last spring.

The debate on second reading lasted two days last spring. The seven speakers who participated for the official opposition mentioned the dangers they saw in moving into the very sensitive area of federal-provincial relations, and they put forward ideas for strengthening and improving the bill. In committee, we were intent upon being provident housekeepers, looking at the terms of the bill and the auditing conditions. Witnesses such as officials of Imperial Oil of Canada and the attorney general of Alberta were called. We found out from the latter gentleman that although much of this bill is according to the understanding between the 11 governments, part III was not part of that understanding.

Part III shows us that when dealing with matters of federal and provincial jurisdiction we need all the help and competence of the people in our system of communications and consultation. The attorney general of Alberta said in very clear terms that part III was not only part of the understanding arrived at by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the ten premiers, but that Alberta could not agree to it. This bill is simply a flat, brutal statement, in the name of bureaucratic efficiency, that if there is no agreement the federal government has the power—and intends to use it—to impose unilaterally a price control system in Canada. I suggest that the question of price controls, as evidenced by court decisions over generations, is purely in the provincial field.

We had an election last summer. I got the impression at that time that the government was opposed to wage and price controls and other parties were also. But one of the first acts of the government in this new parliament is to bring in a bill—not just a housekeeping bill to get us by for a year or so and to adjust to the new situation of petroleum in the world, but permanent legislation to control prices. This first step in the area of control will lead to the control of other products, Madam Speaker, and eventually to wage control. That point should be kept in mind during this debate. Although this government campaigned against wage and price controls, it is now using the excuse