

Quebec in these circumstances. However, generally speaking people in Quebec are reacting smartly to this situation. Especially my own constituents who are considered to be the most well-informed in the province because I do my best to keep them informed about all that is going on. Let me read this report from our regional daily:

Oil consumers get panicky.

Panicky heating oil users are in the process of creating a truly artificial shortage at the oil retailing level.

That was the statement made yesterday by Mr. Jean-Louis Gauthier, manager of A.E. Gauthier Co. and director of Golden Eagle of Canada.

Mr. Gauthier said that the psychosis which was developing within—

Mr. Trudel: Is he your brother?

Mr. Gauthier (Roberval): No, I do not even know him.

—within our population could further complicate the situation, admittedly serious, that will prevail this winter.

It is reported that some customers have acquired additional tanks holding up to 4,000 gallons, which far exceeds a family's winter oil consumption.

Those people who are hoarding oil are certainly creating a shortage for the time being. Retailers are operating on a quota basis and in many cases they will exceed their supplies for November and December, said Mr. Gauthier.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is on account of those alarming rumours, of those limitations, that people are frightened and some families in other parts of the country are bound to be deprived of oil at certain times, if they are not totally short of it.

The script is always the same, Mr. Speaker. After the alarm cry, they create panic and all the news media, which are in the pay of the government in power, react as expected. The people are fooled and we can read all about it in the newspapers. Meanwhile, Quebec pretends to ignore everything and, as always, asks Ottawa to act on their behalf. Then we can read the following in another newspaper article:

Ottawa acts on behalf of Quebec in the oil situation.

The dependence of the Bourassa government on Ottawa and on oil companies and the lack of leadership from the Department of Natural Resources paralyse the energy policy in Quebec. This is what the Official Opposition maintained yesterday when they introduced their first non confidence motion on the energy policy of the government.

According to the Leader of the Opposition, the problems in Quebec are directly related to this twofold dependence; "... dependence of Quebec, first as far as the energy they need is concerned, which is from 75 to 80 per cent of energy consumption, second, dependence on large oil companies which import, sell and distribute oil; as the government does not know anything as far as stocks are concerned, they cannot intervene."

Mr. Speaker, before referring this bill to the Committee, I ask the minister to recall that Confederation concerns the provinces as well and that the government has to know their will before voting such a bill which will have far reaching consequences on future federal-provincial relations.

If this government no longer wants to abide by the principles of confederation, let it say so to the Canadians and stop taking indirect means to bring about centralization. We must keep in mind that the confederation has

Energy Supplies Emergency Act

been created by the provinces, and that the federal government must therefore be their instrument. But today this order of things is reversed and this is quite deplorable for all Canada because this kind of situation causes all the disagreements between the provinces.

I hope this government will scrutinize itself before it is too late, for if they go on the same way as in the past it will not be long before we can say it is too late.

[English]

Mr. Frank Hamilton (Swift Current-Maple Creek): Mr. Speaker I am pleased to take this opportunity to express some thoughts on Bill C-236, the energy supplies emergency bill. The bill gives power to the minister to set prices for energy resources, to control exports and imports, to establish rationing and to take almost any other action that the cabinet decides. This legislation is one more step in a game more easily begun than ended. In its proposed form, this bill could ensure that never again will a province be able to uphold its rights to control energy resources without resorting to extraordinary measures. This bill gives powers as far reaching as wartime measures, and the severity of the bill depends upon unknowns.

I have had some experience, Mr. Speaker, in administering an act of parliament as chairman of a government board. To me it is almost beyond belief that regulations made under this act will supersede a good many acts of parliament. This is heavy stuff indeed. A question that has bothered me a good deal during my service with the government, and now as a member of parliament, is just how reliable is the advice of the senior government servants to members of parliament and to cabinet ministers. The latest example is the minister's erratic replies to questions on Canada's oil situation. They are all very hazy. He has been saying he had been given the information by what he calls his technical committee. So the erratic information the minister has been getting from his so-called technical committee is in question as, of course, is the government's whole handling of this so-called energy crisis.

Far too many senior government servants who administer the programs passed by parliament do not have any real sympathy for the law to succeed. They should at least have some will to ensure success of the acts and programs. Should they not be like a surgeon performing an operation? Surely, he has some desire for the patient to live. Government employees and civil servants are usually people who have nothing to do with producing goods. The further removed they are, the more influential they seem to be with their daily power of suggestion to the minister. A good number of them are disdainful of commerce. Let us look at clause 3 of the bill before us. It reads:

There is hereby established an energy supplies allocation board consisting of a chairman and four other members to be appointed by the governor in council to hold office during pleasure.

It is the "during pleasure" part that I want to speak about. The members of the National Energy Board are appointed to hold office during "good behaviour for a period of seven years". There is at least some security of tenure and some independence for board members. Their numbers are to be increased to nine by this bill. The members of this new energy supplies allocation board are to be appointed to hold office "during pleasure." There is