

to show the sweetest disposition, the like of which we have not seen since January 4, 1973, or at least during my short experience with members of the Tory party. I was so relieved to see this conciliatory attitude because I recognized the seriousness of the emergency we were facing, and the potential emergency for which the government was attempting to prepare. We had but to read the newspapers to be convinced of the fact that we were facing very serious difficulties indeed.

On top of that evidence, which showed that the crisis was one that we ought to be contemplating seriously, came support from that particular company which had no problem at all with its supplies. In fact, it gets all its supplies from Venezuela. Of course, then the Tory members wanted somebody from Texaco. It does not get all its oil from Venezuela. It gets some of its oil from the Arab countries. We were dealing with a particular witness who was not facing any shortages—

**An hon. Member:** Who is?

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, we get that from a member from Alberta. While we are freezing in the darkness, let us consider the seriousness of that interjection from the hon. member from Alberta.

Now, we have a bill which, after the complete conversion of the Tory party, progressed through committee stage and which is the result of compromise. I still recall the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) and the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) sitting at a press table, smiling here and there, pointing out adjustments in the bill. They did so in a very friendly manner. They are both present. I am sure they will recall that occasion with fond memories, once they have left this honourable assembly.

I might point out that I am slightly disappointed at the amendment that was presented, because I feel we have a very potent bill indeed. There is no doubt about that. I am aware of the constitutional limitations that face the executive in the implementation of its provisions. There is no doubt in my mind that there is too much power given to the executive. I did not feel that it was necessary to bring this bill back to parliament for debate within the time stipulated because, in my opinion, the courts of the land could well determine whether a declaration of emergency was one that the government was entitled to make, having regard to all the factors relating to such an emergency.

There is no question at all that the government would not interfere with private contracts, as it has power to do under this legislation, unless there was a state of national emergency. The cases are quite clear. I do not have to cite them. I do not need Senator Forsey to assist me at this time, but I suggest the cases are legion to show that the emergency provisions of this bill could not be brought into force until there was a de facto emergency. Further, if a declaration were made of an emergency which was not justified by the facts, then any citizen of Canada directly affected by the implementation of the provisions of this bill could bring an application before the Supreme Court, in order to present to that court the facts as he saw them to enable the court to determine whether or not the government was acting soundly.

#### *Energy Supplies Emergency Act*

I suggest that the government would not make such a declaration without very close consultation with the provinces.

**An hon. Member:** For the first time.

**Mr. Blais:** I hear this "For the first time." For some time now, the Conservative party has been suggesting that the government has not been consulting with the provinces. I take strong issue with that, because the government has been in very close touch with the provinces on this energy question. It may be that some of the actions taken by the government have not been to the liking of one province or another. Evidently they were not in certain circumstances. We forget that we have a constitution in Canada which creates a federal government, and that government is responsible for the peace, order and good government of the whole country. At the time we were dealing with the Quebec problem there were many cries for stronger central government in order to achieve a united nation, one country. There were a number of cries that the provinces were too strong, that the central government was too weak, at the time we were facing the Quebec problem, which now evidently has been resolved.

● (1740)

The Conservatives are now saying that the central government is attempting to take too much power, too many responsibilities; that we should give more power to the provinces; that the provinces, after all, have a right to their resources. I recognize that they have a right to the resources that lie within their boundaries, but the Conservative Party would like us to believe that they also have a right over interprovincial trade. That is their view, Mr. Speaker, and I cannot interpret it as being any different. When Mr. Pearson was prime minister of the country, the Tories were saying that there was too much concentration of power in the provinces. Now, they have done a complete flip-flop, and because we are dealing with a different province, they say the federal government is attempting to take too much power unto itself. I suggest that they cannot suck and whistle at the same time.

**An hon. Member:** You are doing it.

**Mr. Blais:** These one liners slay me, Mr. Speaker. We are dealing with an emergency situation, a confrontation not between the federal government and the provincial governments, but between groups of provinces; one group identified as the consuming provinces and the other group the producing provinces. Mr. Speaker, we are attempting at this particular time to protect the people of Canada from the Tories because it is their intention to delay the bill. I might indicate as well that in this conflict between the producing and the consuming provinces, there will have to be an arbiter.

I am very anxious to see the results of the meetings on the 23rd and 24th of this month between the first ministers of the various provinces and the federal government. Two questions have to be resolved: the question of pricing and the question of supply. The question of pricing is a short term, immediate problem but the question of supply is dependent on how long it takes to build a pipeline and where it will be located. The question of pricing is going to