

First of all, may I deal with the comments made yesterday by the hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais), who has a very good, trained voice, such a trained voice that he sat in his place in the committee, and when the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) just raised his eyebrows, the hon. member for Nipissing was on his feet to move amendments. It was a great example of ESP. Indeed, I thought the hon. member was in training to be a parliamentary secretary; on his performance in the standing committee he certainly earned it.

The hon. member made a comment about the multinational oil corporations, and how this party might have changed its position. We will give the hon. member a chance to test his relationships with the multinational corporations, as well as my hon. friends to my left, in a little while with another amendment. But let me tell the hon. member that when the members of this party in committee saw, as a result of honest, hard-working negotiations that took place prior to the Christmas recess, that the government was prepared to accept an amendment to the bill that would make parliamentary approval a condition precedent to the government's declaration of an emergency, and that the minister indicated there would be a parliamentary right to review, and if necessary to revoke, that declaration of emergency, then and only then did this party make a change in its position.

It was our opinion, as we so stated during the course of second reading, that without that safeguard this was not the kind of power that should be placed in the hands of the government. This has nothing to do with the multinationals. As a matter of fact, we disapproved of the position taken by the multinational corporations, as expressed by the official from Exxon or Imperial Oil who appeared before the committee. He said that he loved the bill, that he was delighted with it. Of course he would be, because one of the effects of the bill would be to give the multinational oil companies legal sanction to do what they have been doing all along, that is to arrange a form of allocation of supplies which has suited them not only domestically but externally. Indeed, I read that there is now being carried on in the United States a close examination and scrutiny of precisely the position taken by some of the multinational oil corporations regarding exaggerating the energy crisis.

I was not privy to what went on in the discussions of the technical advisory committee, but I would consider it very likely that this bill has its genesis in the technical advisory committee. The representatives of the large oil companies said they loved it and welcomed it. As the president of Imperial Oil said before the committee, they would like it a little better if they were given blanket exemption from the provisions of the combines legislation. They would like a measure whereby they could get a better form of compensation, but they said outside of that the bill was fine. Of course it is fine, because it is just giving them legal approval to continue doing what they have been doing and wanted to do. I am amazed that my friends to my left continue to adopt this position. However, I will not go into that any further at this time.

● (1650)

It was at the time the minister gave an indication that our position had changed, after working with members of

Energy Supplies Emergency Act

this party, members on the government side and members of the NDP in an attempt to make a very bad and repugnant bill more attractive, or at least less repugnant, that we saw a more co-operative spirit, as the member suggested. Had that not been the case, and someone talked a little while ago about hell freezing over, that might well have been the situation. Without that safeguard, and the protection which this House must have, we would not have been prepared to allow the bill to pass in its present form without putting up a valiant struggle.

With regard to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), our position throughout has been that we wanted an opportunity for parliamentary approval of any declaration of emergency. While at no time did anyone define what parliament meant, in our opinion and I think obviously in the opinion of members of the NDP and of the government, when that expression was used it involved both Houses of parliament.

Mr. Lewis: And Her Majesty.

Mr. Baldwin: Yes, and Her Majesty and her representative. When you look at clause 35 you will find a provision for parliamentary review in respect of a mandatory allocation from time to time, and we note it has reference to both this House and the other place. My hon. friends to the left in the NDP did not put a motion, but, as the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Harding) quite properly said, they circulated a list of the amendments they proposed to move. They gave that list to the Chair and to us, and one of the amendments was an amendment to Clause 11 which provided for a parliamentary review that included both this House and the Senate. As a result of the language in which the amendment of the NDP was couched, and the language used by the government in respect of Clause 35, we found ourselves in total disagreement. That is where I part company with my friend the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre.

It is, and has always been, our view that if the government declared an emergency and this House agreed there was an emergency, it would be 99.99 per cent unlikely that the heavily Liberal-dominated other place would dare to interfere with that declaration. However, I admit that the possibility does exist, but I do suggest it is most unlikely that it would happen, as a matter of practical fact. We indicated that we were not going to accept, under any circumstances, a situation that would have developed had the type of amendment the government offered and the type of amendment offered by the NDP been accepted, namely that if the government declared an emergency and this House decided there was no emergency following a debate, the Senate could say there was no emergency with the result there would be no existing declaration of an emergency. Under no circumstances would this party accept that type of parliamentary review, and it was in that context that we pressed for the amendment.

In our view parliament includes the two Houses, and if both Houses are included in respect of the type of amendment I put forward, which was later accepted, to the effect that under no circumstances would the Senate be allowed to veto a declaration by this House that an emergency exists, we would have no objection. We would have no