

If we could broaden this particular bill today we could put something in it to really make sure that these members got decent salaries and decent status. We have to upgrade these boards, the National Energy Board and other administrative boards, almost to the status of the Federal Court. We should do that because these boards are handling the day to day important matters in Canada, for example the exportation of oil and gas, television licences, the cost of telephone service, prices of this and that, air fares and so on. These boards need to be upgraded. They do not need to be populated by low level appointments. In the past there have been a lot of what one commentator called political hacks appointed to the board. It was not me who said that but a distinguished commentator from the Law Reform Commission.

The other thing we need to do with the National Energy Board is upgrade the role of board counsel. We also need to make public and open up the internal procedures of that board and let the sunlight in as they do with administrative boards in the United States. We need to consult people about appointments, including provincial governments. We should change the background requirements of some of the people who are appointed to these boards. For example, we do not have any environmentalists on the National Energy Board, yet we have been hearing from very active people on environmental law and environmental matters for the last 15 years. Why don't we do that? There are no northerners or native people on these boards. There should at least be a representative of those groups on the boards.

● (1240)

There are many things which can be done to upgrade the boards. I would ask the hon. member to read my bill over the Christmas holidays. He will find it in the October 10, 1980, *Hansard* and I will put it in his Christmas stocking.

In conclusion, I say that we in the NDP support the provisions of this bill. However, we draw the attention of the government to how appointments are made. Let us not have the usual political hacks. Let us not have the former candidates and bag men. We should try to get board members, even as temporary members, who will take to the board some experience in various fields and who have backgrounds which are not now represented on the boards. We need people who understand the plight of small farmers whose land might have to be expropriated for these public works projects. With that comment, Mr. Speaker, I think I can give our party's consent to the speedy passage of this particular bill.

Mr. MacLaren: Mr. Chairman, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Moncton:

That Clause 1 of Bill C-87 be amended by adding immediately after line 16 on page 1 the following: "(6.1) Not more than six temporary members of the Board shall hold office at any one time".

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The House has heard the proposed amendment of the parliamentary secretary. Does the House agree to this amendment?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Electricity and Gas Inspection Act

Motion agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 4 inclusive agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): When shall the bill be read the third time; by unanimous consent, now?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Ouellet (for Mr. Lalonde) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

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[Translation]

ELECTRICITY AND GAS INSPECTION ACT

INSPECTION OF ELECTRIC AND GAS METERS AND SUPPLIES

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs) moved that Bill C-11, an Act relating to the inspection of electric and gas meters and supplies, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief, except to move adoption of this bill which is to replace the Gas Inspection Act and the Electricity Inspection Act. There are several good reasons, Mr. Speaker, why the two existing acts should be consolidated in a single act. First of all, existing legislation governing the accuracy of measuring electricity and gas has not been changed since 1920, so that a review and improvements are necessary to reflect present-day circumstances and technological progress.

Second, the future act will allow accreditation of private meter manufacturers, so as to increase the industry's responsibility for measurement accuracy. However, I can assure the House that the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs will continue to test electric or gas meters whose accuracy is contested by a purchaser or vendor. Such tests have proved to be an excellent means of ensuring that everyone gets a fair deal, and if they are combined with regular inspections of accredited manufacturers by inspectors, Canadians should be receiving even better service in this area. I would like to point out that the act provides for adjusting provisions to measuring instruments to be used for new energy forms or means of distribution, such as the supply of steam from a central source.

I can assure the House that the intent of the act has received very broad support. In fact, a number of public utilities have written to ask us to accelerate passage of the bill. Thus, the proposed legislation will maintain a system under which our