

National Energy Board Act (No. 3)

● (1740)

I hope the minister will go back to the drawing board and consider the concept of a national power grid with the principle of a common carrier. There is much law on that topic. If he is going to amend the original act, let him at the same time make sure members of the National Energy Board do their duty by carrying out the provisions of the act, building up the expertise and making projections. There will then be some sort of advice in the hands of the government on which to make decisions.

Finally, Canadians fought hard to win jurisdiction over the bottom of the sea. Canadians fought for this right. We brought the great powers to our support, reluctant though they were. Eighty-six nations in Geneva voted unanimously for the resolution in 1958 which was later approved by the United Nations. What we proposed and fought for is now the international law of the world. And any time anyone infringes on that law we have the right to take them to court at The Hague. We have a right to impose our will because what is off our shores is ours.

I hope this knowledge will get into the hands of the drafters of legislation in the Department of Justice and in other departments. I hope they will get away from this business of assuming that because there is a bunch of nitwits trying to reform something that it is law. It is only law when legislation is passed. Meanwhile, we own our offshore property and no one touches it. The British fleet off the Falkland Islands is teaching that lesson to one country in the southern hemisphere which was caught carrying out a little bit of imperialistic aggression just a month ago.

I think we in Canada can do no less. What is ours is ours unless we give it up by agreement.

I hope these views will be taken seriously by hon. members and that the government will give us a six-month hoist on this legislation in order to make a better bill out of it.

Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I will not take too much time, but I have a few remarks to address on Bill C-108. It is typical of too many bills drafted by this minister and his officials in the department. Bill C-108 is one of the eight divisions of Bill C-94 which in itself is almost an omnibus bill in the sense of mixing apples and oranges and confusing the issue.

The minister spent most of his time dealing with the provisions having to do with putting power lines under the jurisdiction of the National Energy Board in the same way that gas and oil pipelines are. I do not think anybody in the House, wherever they are or wherever they sit, would argue against the notion that we should, in fact, be a common market in Canada. What applies to pipelines applies to power utilities, and the minister covered all of those points very eloquently. I will not repeat them other than to say there is a fundamental, bottom line equity to that element, and certainly no reasonable person could oppose that.

In terms of the situation between Quebec and Newfoundland at this time, the real source of contention is that awful contract which was signed by a Liberal premier of Newfoundland, which really does shortchange Newfoundland. There is no question that contract shortchanges Newfoundland and it

shortchanges Newfoundland badly. This bill does not deal with that, nor does it address the real sore in the circumstances.

One would think, over the last eight and a half years, that if we have learned anything about energy in this country we should have learned that unilateralism does not work. Big Brother in Ottawa cannot unilaterally impose its will. Every time it tries, whether it is by putting a price freeze on crude oil in western Canada or by trying to impose a taxation regime in opposition to the province of British Columbia, Alberta or Saskatchewan, it fails. When that is done, it causes bickering, retaliation and uncertainty. Lay-offs and loss of jobs result. There are no winners as a result of unilateral action. In Canada, a federal state, there is no alternative to negotiation, painful as it is, and especially if you happen to be a federal bureaucrat and believe that you have the right answers, to negotiate is painful. It is much better to have the power and to be able to say, "We can do it." But Canada does not work that way. Until the drafters of legislation recognize that, we will carry on with this interminable debating, arguing, fighting, loss of national will and purpose, which further weaken the fabric of this country and cause more and more Canadians to look at extreme options, such as the Western Canada Concept etc. We have had enough of that. We do not need any more of that. What we need is a government to take its responsibilities seriously and to start negotiating. But the real crunch in this bill is not the electricity portion, which really has nothing to do with the National Energy Program, but it is the parts that deal with oil and gas. Clause 26(2) of this bill will provide to the governor in council—in other words, to the same officials who brought us that disastrous National Energy Program which has caused the departure from this country of \$17 billion at least and which has caused thousands and thousands of people to be put out of work and has put off our energy self-sufficiency for a decade or two—the control over the price of exported gas and oil.

The minister said in the House that the reason for the government's wanting to do it was that the question is political. He said it is a political question. The price of gas and oil is determined by a marketplace, not a perfect marketplace, but a marketplace that is being influenced by OPEC and others, but a marketplace nonetheless.

We export oil and gas to the United States, basically. Some time in the future maybe we will export some liquefied products to other countries. But we have one customer, and that customer, the U.S. has a deregulated market. There is the mixing of supply and demand and thereby a market price. If we want to sell into that market, we have to satisfy that market price. To say the pricing of gas and oil for export is a political question, and therefore is to be put in the hands of those officials who drafted the National Energy Program, is absurd. More power is what the officials are seeking. It is power so they can go to the government of British Columbia and say, "I know you have some natural gas you want to export, but we think this is the price." The producers in British