

Atlantic Provinces Power Development

did very little over the years to electrify our province. It has been only by imaginative planning and by sacrifice on the part of our people that we have been able to bring electricity and power to our province.

I believe, just as the people of the Atlantic provinces who come under this bill believe, that they do need and should get some assistance by way of grants of money set aside for the construction of thermal plants. Certainly, the same principle should apply to Saskatchewan. I cannot agree that we are in the position the hon. member for Macleod indicated. He said they should have it if they wanted it. In the province of Saskatchewan we do want it, as I indicated this afternoon; we do need it. When you take \$40 million out of your public revenue in order to try to supply your province with power you find that it can only be done by so arranging the finances of your province that you do not spend as much money on other types of government expenditure as you would like to. When you have a central government, such as we have in Canada which, as I indicated this afternoon, is getting on the average 71 per cent of the total taxes collected and only 13 per cent going to the 10 provinces, which has to be divided among them, and only 10 per cent going to the municipal governments, you find that you do have a financial problem, which I think should be met by broad vision and statesmanship on the part of the federal government.

I agree with the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre who said earlier today that he thought an amendment to the act on the statute books would have been far more equitable and meaningful than what we have before us today. I can only say I regret that the federal government, in spite of what has been said, has not gone farther in this legislation. I appreciate the feeling of the people of the Atlantic provinces. I know they do need and will welcome this assistance. Some of the other provinces are in the same financial boat and should be entitled to assistance on the same basis.

Mr. Lesage: What points will be linked by the first interconnecting transmission lines between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Will the hon. member clarify his question a little?

Mr. Lesage: Will it be between Saint John and Halifax, for instance?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): I know that one of the first interconnection lines is between Saint John and Halifax.

Mr. Lesage: I want to know whether it is going to be the first?

[Mr. McCullough.]

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): I think it is. I think I must say no agreement has yet been completed between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. They are working on that agreement now and I understand it concerns the building of a transmission line from Halifax to Saint John. According to the plan, I think that is the first line. When the hon. member mentioned points I wondered whether he wanted me to name all the towns. I could not have done that.

Mr. Lesage: Will the line have a capacity of 138 kilovolts or 230?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): I think the recommendation is that it will start out at 138 and then jump to the larger amount later on as the demand warrants it.

Mr. Lesage: Is that the way in which the minister intends to proceed?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): We are following the recommendations of Montreal Engineering firm; we have no reason not to.

Clause agreed to.

On clause 2—*Definitions.*

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): May I put a question to the minister regarding clause 2? As he knows, in discussing this legislation we have made the point that there are two limitations in it which we would like to see removed. I suppose we can hardly ask the minister to accept an amendment to subparagraph (a) to have "Atlantic provinces" amended so that the act would apply to all the provinces of Canada? Therefore, we will assume that so far as this particular bill is concerned we have lost that part of the battle. We accept that in good grace. As we said at the very beginning, what is good for the Atlantic Provinces is good for Canada as a whole and we are supporting the bill.

However, having accepted that, there still remains the other limitation which is spelled out in subparagraph (b) of clause 2 where we find these words:

"Power project" means all or any of the following, namely, facilities for the generation of electric energy by steam-driven generators—

I say to the minister that it is not my purpose to move an amendment in this thinly populated house tonight but I wonder whether he would not consider having one of his colleagues move an amendment to delete the words "by steam-driven generators". The effect of that would be to keep this what the government wants it to be, an Atlantic provinces bill, and yet to make provision for hydro-electric power in any of the Atlantic provinces if a request of that nature were made to the government which the government was willing to meet.