

National Energy Board Act (No. 3)

provinces concerned. In the case of the bill being considered in the House today, there is a definite lack of similarity. Normally, I think, the National Energy Board has a very important role to play in developing our resources, and I feel that it should respond to, assist and even supplement the objectives and priorities that have been set by provinces, persons or companies. Here, the federal government has created a tool for the exploration and management of our natural resources for the benefit of the Canadian people.

I also heard the minister explain earlier in very simple terms what might happen if each province were allowed to purchase natural gas from a neighbouring province, take a profit and route it to Quebec City. However, the minister forgot a very basic factor, and this is inexcusable because he knows perfectly well that the objections raised by his own province are based on the fact that it has almost unlimited hydroelectric resources. And the minister failed to mention the consequences of this bill if it were to be ratified without the consent of both provinces. I think that this was a voluntary oversight which is extremely important if not essential for the people of Quebec. He is aware of the conditions in Quebec. He knows why Quebec objects but I should thank him and even congratulate him for emphasizing that the best solution would surely be that both provinces should come to an agreement. There is no doubt then that we would applaud a bill resulting from a negotiated agreement between Quebec and Newfoundland. Like the minister, we regret the dispute existing between Newfoundland and Quebec and both my Quebec and Newfoundland colleagues should be quite interested in a settlement and in a bill which would fulfil the aspirations of both provinces and which would be consistent, of course, with national legislation. The minister has carefully avoided saying that he does not want to intervene in provincial matters but nevertheless, it remains that if he decides to answer Newfoundland's call, he will not be fulfilling the wishes of Quebec. The minister should honestly and objectively try to pursue that possibility and arrange a settlement between the two provinces. But it is not by provoking one of the reluctant provinces with an Ottawa-imposed bill. The minister is certainly well aware that from the psychological point of view, this bill will be regarded by thousands of Quebecers as utterly unacceptable, and that the best solution would be the one he said he hoped for, namely, a negotiated settlement between the two provinces. But I have felt that under the present system, I certainly could not ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) for an understanding government and co-operative federalism. There are probably a number of ministers who are more open to and eager for true federalism.

I think that the minister representing Quebec should take this opportunity to prevail upon those two provinces to come to an agreement; there is no doubt that under a federal system such as ours, the federal government has both the duty and responsibility to help them carry out such a great project as the development of our natural resources in the interest of all the provincial partners within this country. Because the minister stated that this bill is important and because it seems

he introduced it halfheartedly, I feel, both as a Quebecer and as an elected Member of this Parliament, that I should urge all hon. members to make a special effort and in view of the bill which is now before the House, give the minister the time and the opportunity to make his proposal work. His intentions are most honourable, I am sure, for he has recognized that the best solution would be a negotiated settlement between Newfoundland and Quebec, and that the Quebec government has shown a degree of flexibility both on the possible reexamination of a contract which was entered into quite a long time ago and on the shared development of other hydroelectric projects.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I beg my hon. colleagues from Quebec and the other provinces for a six-month hoist on this bill. We are aware of the dilemma a number of hon. members are in because at the same time they must defend the interests of their respective provinces while defending those of all Canadians. We want to represent the interests of the provinces and try to adjust them to a national objective that would allow the ten provinces of this country to feel at home in Canada and want to be a part of this wonderful country.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I feel that if we rush the passing of this bill, we will antagonize one of the two provinces and possibly others, but one in particular that is represented here by 74 out of 75 hon. members, and whose people make up 25 per cent of the total Canadian population. I think I am being fair and equally mindful of the interests of Quebec, Newfoundland and Canada in requesting hon. members in this House for a hoist on the present bill with an amendment which I am about to read, Mr. Speaker; here it is:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:

"Bill C-108, an act to amend the National Energy Board Act (No. 3), be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months hence."

• (1640)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. The hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle) would have noticed that I have just taken the Chair. Consequently, I only began to pay attention a moment ago. I believe he has put a motion for a six-month hoist on the present bill, seconded by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton). I will read the motion.

[Translation]

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:

"Bill C-108, An Act to amend the National Energy Board Act (No. 3), be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months hence."

[English]

The Chair wishes to consult for a moment with one of the Table officers to determine whether this is consistent with the fact that we have a House order before us. As soon as I have