

meet the requirements of the standing orders, practices and rules of this House. Therefore I cannot accept it.

● (2040)

Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the nays have it.  
*And more than five members having risen:*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to section 11 of Standing Order 75, the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

Because the House spent quite a few minutes on the procedural debate, I wonder if hon. members would agree to consider motion No. 5 now. The Chair has already given notice about its position regarding the acceptability of motion No. 4, and after the House has disposed of motion No. 5 perhaps hon. members will express their views on the procedural acceptability of motion No. 4. We will now consider motion No. 5.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon) moved:

That Bill C-13, an act to amend the Northern Canada Power Commission Act, be amended in Clause 5 by striking out lines 8 to 16 at page 3 and substituting the following therefor:

13. The Commission may investigate a project and advise the Minister or the Commissioner in Council of the Northwest Territories or the Commissioner in Council of the Yukon Territory, as the case may be, of the areas that might be served, the estimated amount of capital required, and the proposed rates that in the opinion of the Commission would produce revenue equal to the costs specified in section 10.

He said: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Benjamin: This had better be good.

Mr. Nielsen: I am sure if the hon. member who just interjected would read the act and then read the amendment, he would concede there is merit to the amendment. In case others in this House do not appreciate the refinements of the proposed amendment, I will take a few moments to explain it—with the hon. member's approval, of course.

The bill we are discussing seeks to repeal section 13 of the existing act in its entirety, and replace it with proposed clause 5. I quarrel with the thought behind the repeal of section 13. Not only has the government deleted sections 6(2) and 6(3) of the act, but now it intends to delete those all-important words in the existing section which would require the commission, with respect to any investigation it might undertake, to confine the costs of such investigation to an amount equal to the revenue generated, as specified in section 10. This important provi-

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sion was written into the act in 1948 as a piece of insurance, to prevent the commission from embarking on the investigation of a project when costs might exceed any contemplated revenues which might be realized if the project were undertaken. I think that safeguard, that insurance, should remain in the act.

I do not think projects should be undertaken with a reckless disregard for revenues which might be derived from those projects. I think a project should only be undertaken if revenues generated will pay for the costs of the project; otherwise the project should not go ahead. If we allow that provision to remain in the act we shall keep the self-sustaining theory alive, the theory on which the act was based in the initial instance.

I have a further objection to the clause as it exists and as it has been carried over into this bill. According to the language of the bill the commission may investigate a project and advise the minister, or the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories or the Commissioner of the Yukon Territory, as the case may be, and so on. That, Sir, is as fine a piece of gobbledegook as I have run across in a long time.

Sir, the commissioner of each territory is an employee of the minister, and the requirement for the Northern Canada Power Commission, which is responsible to the minister, to report to his employee is sheer nonsense. If that reporting provision is to mean anything, surely there should be a requirement to report to the commissioner in council of each of the territories. Asking the commission, which is controlled by the minister, to report to his employee, and his employee alone, makes no sense at all. If the concept that the council of either of the territories is involved in the decision-making process means anything, the reporting provision I have referred to makes no sense. My suggested amendment, as contained in motion No. 5, would change that section of the bill. I would require the commission with respect to the investigation of any project to report to the minister on the one hand, or on the other hand to the commissioner in council of the Northwest Territories or the commissioner in council of the Yukon Territory.

I was very careful in drawing up the wording of the proposed amendment in the hope that it might find favour with the government, because it leaves the commission the alternative of reporting either to the minister or to the commissioner in council. The choice is left open. On the other hand if the minister were to tell the commission, "You are to report to me, under the section, and to no one else," he would completely nullify the effect of the words "commissioner in council". My amendment, if accepted, would at least leave the semblance of a line of communication to the elected representatives of the people in both territories.

My proposed amendment also seeks to change that part of clause 5 of the bill in which the government would simply like to confine the report to the estimated amount of capital required and the effect on the schedules or ranges of rates established under section 10. The existing provision of the act requires the commission to report on the basis that any such project would produce revenues equal to the cost of installing it. If this feature is retained it is my submission that consumers in the north will not