

when and who are having trouble making ends meet that there is no problem in the fishery, that everything is hunky-dory, coming up roses. It is not difficult to understand why that same Prime Minister stands by and allows the present unconscionable situation as it affects Churchill Falls power and Labrador Power generally to continue.

I realize that my time has just about run out. I believe I have made the essential point that this bill, while it may well facilitate the export of electricity to the United States—and there are pros and cons there which we will be getting into by way of amendments in committee—has for Newfoundlanders another ominous implication. The insult will now become more graphic, more technical. It is the insult that says that if you live anywhere else in Canada, yes, you can move your products to the United States or wherever you want, but if you live in Newfoundland you are going to have to ask permission. Then, once you ask it, you are not going to get it, particularly if it relates to your richest resource, hydro power from Labrador. That is the shame of it. We will keep fighting that until somebody over there hears.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, if those of us who are here cared to look outside they would confirm that it is a rather dreary and slow moving Friday afternoon with the House virtually empty as members get ready to go to their constituencies and handle constituency duties over the weekend as well as spend time with their families for Thanksgiving.

I say that with recognition of the fact that those duties themselves are very important. I think it does bring to light the interesting consequence or coincidence that this Bill is brought to the floor at this particular time of the day and this particular time of the week. It appears almost insignificant as it is brought up for debate. It is an insignificant appearing bill, and yet one that is extremely vital in defining and determining Canada's future and the future of Canada's resources. I would venture to say that the presentation of this bill to the House marks a turning point in the control of Canada's resource industry.

Government Orders

I think what we see in this bill is a clear and yet insidious attempt of this government to harmonize our energy policies with that of our neighbour to the south. Clearly, we are undoing some of the regulatory control that we have traditionally had over our resource industries, such as electricity in this case.

The purpose of this bill is very succinct. It is to facilitate the export of electrical power to the United States. Let's call a spade a spade. That is what it is here for.

I want to say that I agree with my colleagues who have spoken on this issue before, electricity is important as an energy commodity in Canada. It will become increasingly important within the next few years as we struggle to extract ourselves from an economy, a society that has relied on fossil fuels as a major energy source. Everyone here in the chamber and every person across Canada certainly knows the problems that not only Canada but the world is having in terms of emissions of carbon dioxide and global warming.

Electricity is a clean energy source, and because of that will become extremely important in the immediate future. Because it will become increasingly important to Canada as a major energy resource, it stands to reason that the subject of this Bill, that is, how we regulate that energy in the years to come, should also receive some very careful consideration.

For historical reasons there has been a considerable overlap between the provinces and the federal government in terms of the regulation of the electrical industry in Canada. From the outset, when our national energy program was established, the federal government held firmly to the very basic principle that all quantities of electricity to be exported must be surplus to our needs, both to the present needs and to the needs in the reasonably foreseeable future.

Even when the National Energy Board Act in 1959 extended the maximum export licence period for exports from one to 25 years in duration there was still the very clear expectation that our long-term energy export licences would be granted only in the exceptional circumstances that we did in fact have energy supplies surplus to our needs.