

*Government Orders*

I ask you, is that what happened in the case of the western provinces when they wanted to move their gas to Ontario? No. They continue to receive full market value for their resource which moves across other provinces. We want to move our resource across a province, in this case the province of Quebec, but we have not been permitted to do so. The solution has been there for some time but it has not been acted upon.

If we go back to 1981-82, the then Government of Canada brought in amendments to the National Energy Board which would have given Newfoundland wheeling rights, that is to say it would have given it the prerogative, the authority, to build a transmission line across the province of Quebec. We all know that proposal, beyond being amended in terms of the act, never got to the implementation stage, and I think we all know why. At the same time, I think that if we are going to stand here in this chamber and talk about the desirability of facilitating freer movement of Canadian electricity into the United States market, we ought to put all our cards on the table. What we are talking about, in effect, is the free movement of some Canadian electricity and this bill does absolutely nothing except add to the insult. It does absolutely nothing to facilitate the movement of that rich resource called Labrador hydro power from Labrador to its markets in the populous northeastern United States. What would that do for the economic well-being of the province of Newfoundland? It would change over night from the so-called, have-not status to a have status.

I believe it was Joey Smallwood in his heyday who used to talk about the last remaining storehouse of wealth in North America in reference to Labrador. He was right. The irony is that we who own the storehouse do not really have the keys to it. We own the resource but we cannot unlock it to the benefit of our people in Newfoundland and Labrador. So it is difficult for me as a Newfoundlander to sit in this House when this bill is being discussed and not rise at least for a few moments to flag that terrible circumstance.

I would make one appeal again, the appeal that has been made many times, the appeal to fairness, the same principle that ensured that western gas would move to Ontario. I would appeal to consistency, the principle that surely dictates that if you do it in the case of gas from western Canada, you ought to do the parallel thing in relation to the movement of hydroelectricity in the case of Newfoundland.

I alluded to the reason. Let me be more specific. The reason is summed up in the little cliché "Might is right". It is summed up in the unspoken understanding that there are more votes in Quebec than there are in Newfoundland. That we understand. We only have to watch what is happening to the Unemployment Insurance Act, Canada Post, railway abandonment, to the decision on the CF-18, taking it from Manitoba and putting it into Quebec, to understand the reality of how decisions get made these days by this particular government.

• (1400)

I am not sure why I take the trouble on this one. I am not sure because I know full well that Newfoundland's circumstance in this important matter must be of no consequence at all to the purveyors of what must be the most right-wing Tory agenda ever inflicted on any country anywhere. Why would this crowd, including the member for St. John's West and the member for St. John's East, be bothered with details such as whether Newfoundland becomes a have province or continues to languish as a have-not province. Why should they be concerned with that kind of detail when they are so busy being the attendants at the garage sale of Canada to the Americans, be it in electricity or any other of our resources?

Why do I take the time, Mr. Speaker? Because, at the very least, those of us who are sent here to represent the interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorans have an obligation to flag this issue at every opportunity. We have the obligation to call attention to the despicably punitive treatment which Newfoundland is receiving because of this deal—not only the Upper Churchill, I talk of that too—but I talk also about the continuing refusal to allow Newfoundland to market its resource by moving it across another province, even though that same thing has been done in so far as gas is concerned for western Canada.

Now, speaking clichés, it has been said many times that none is so deaf as he who will not hear and so blind as he who will not see. That is really what we are dealing with here. Last weekend the Prime Minister allowed that Canadians had bent over backwards to bring Newfoundland into Confederation back in 1949. We get that kind of disdainful, condescending attitude towards Newfoundland. We have a Prime Minister who has dispatched his minions to Newfoundland, as he has done today in the person of the Minister for International Trade, the member for St. John's West, to tell Newfoundlanders who are scarcely finding enough money to put bread and butter on the table—those who depend on the fishery either as plant workers or fishermen—