

Atlantic Provinces Power Development

Montreal Engineering Company on these projects and that therefore the extension of the provisions of the bill to include Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island is something which the members of the previous government had not thought about at all.

Mr. Pickersgill: Might I ask the hon. gentleman a question? He has suggested that Newfoundland was not considered in the bill. There was no bill.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): There was no bill, no. There was no evidence that the previous government was prepared to do anything for Newfoundland.

Let us see what this government is going to do for Newfoundland. In Newfoundland, as I stated, we have private companies which have developed power which they are anxious to sell. They can increase that power by using their own resources and without looking for any loan at all. In accordance with an answer given by the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) on November 14 to the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, if any province does come forward with a proposal, that proposal will be examined and if that proposal warrants it the province will receive the consideration the case they make deserves—that was the answer given by the Prime Minister.

What we need at the moment in Newfoundland is transmission lines. The private companies hesitate to extend their lines to areas which they believe will not be profitable. These companies have already built electric power plants to supply areas in which they feel the business they are going to receive justifies the expenditure. I know that the power company operating on the southern shore, which is part of my riding of St. John's West, has during the past year extended the "lights" as we call it down there up as far as Renew's. There are several settlements beyond Renew's, Cappahayden, Portugal Cove South, Trepassey and St. Shotts. The nearest large settlement is 26 miles away, that is a fairly long distance. Power companies naturally weigh the cost of expanding transmission lines that distance against the revenues that they may derive when they get the power delivered.

It seems to me that the government of Newfoundland should now avail itself of the generous conditions offered under this legislation, and ask the federal government to build these transmission lines. They would have 40 years in which to pay for them. No province, and certainly not Newfoundland, has such credit that it could get a loan at these terms, 4½ per cent, the same rate at which the federal government borrows

money. There is a tremendous advantage in part of my district being supplied that way. I speak of my district because I know it better than the others, but my hon. friends who represent other Newfoundland constituencies will agree that I am presenting a problem which must be similar to ones which they have.

There are settlements around St. Mary's Bay which have no electricity at all. What is necessary is to bring transmission lines from the United Towns Electric power lines going to Placentia from Whitbourne and bring it down to Colinet and then across to the more populous parts around St. Mary's bay. Although there may be 15 or 20 settlements around St. Mary's bay at the present time, none of them has electric light.

The problem for the Newfoundland government or the Newfoundland power commission—I shall speak of that in a moment—is to weigh the cost of building power plants against the cost of extending transmission lines. If they do build the power plants they still have to build transmission lines. It seems to me, therefore, that the cheaper thing to do is to ask to have transmission lines built to carry the electricity from the high tension lines owned by United Towns Electric Company. In that way electric light could be delivered, as I said, up to Trepassey and into St. Mary's bay and into Placentia bay; that is so far as the riding I represent is concerned. The same thing could be done in the constituencies of the hon. member for Trinity-Conception and the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate. I am sure they must recognize—

Mr. Pickersgill: Would the hon. member permit a question on that point?

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): Certainly.

Mr. Pickersgill: Where does the minister think the power would be derived from, for example, in the northern part of Bonavista bay, from which company or which plant?

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): I do not know which plant could be used. There is a plant that was built at Lockston. I am not sure whether lines could be extended into the northern part of Bonavista bay. There are inlets all around that bay to which it would be difficult to extend lines. It may be necessary, in my hon. friend's constituency, to develop power. I am quite prepared to agree that if necessary that could be done, as I stated, by applying to the federal government under the principle which was decided here today, and which was stated by the Prime Minister on November 14, if the power commission can make out a case.

[Mr. Browne (St. John's West).]