

*Statement on Minas Basin Project*

on women will change their status; but what I do not want to see is that, having gone into the technical approach to this question and expended a lot of government effort, especially at the federal level, we will say we will take a look at it again in another 20 years. If we do that, the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion will never be able to get his proposal off the ground.

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, I suspect that the excellent speech to which we have just listened was given, in part, as an example of the tidal waves that one can see and hear on the Bay of Fundy.

**Mr. Nowlan:** That is right. I wish I had the kilowatt energy to go with it.

**Mr. Lewis:** I think the hon. member showed megawatt energy, let alone kilowatt. I assure him and others in the House that if some of my colleagues made some good-natured interjections it was not because of any lack of concern about the subject but because the hon. member, with an aplomb that I admire and do not condemn, went on several minutes longer than at this stage we are supposed to do.

**Mr. Nowlan:** You had better watch yourself. On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I have heard the hon. member for York South go on a little too long on some things that I did not think were half as necessary or important as the development of Atlantic tidal power potential.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Béchard):** Order, please. The hon. member for York South.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I must admit, knowing the hon. member with great pleasure, that I should have known better than to make the remark that I did. I was merely explaining the reason to him. I loved what he said and how he said it, and as far I am concerned he could have gone on saying it. The matter he raised may be more important for the people of Canada than one part of the bill that is now before us.

Obviously, it is impossible for any member of this House who does not have engineering training to be able to quarrel with, indeed to evaluate, the report that has been placed in the hands of a few of us in this House. I do want to make a few brief remarks, however.

I am disturbed by the fact that the board said—and the governments concerned have accepted the proposition—that the idea of developing this tidal power must be delayed

until interest rates drop down to about half the present level. Let me say to the minister this means that this tidal power will never be developed. There is not a chance in the world of interest rates going down to half their present level within foreseeable generations. Indeed, the whole tendency over a good many years has been for interest rates to go up. Interest rates will go down somewhat, I hope, but certainly not to the 4 or 5 per cent that the minister and the report talk about.

Secondly, if it were possible for this government and the maritime governments involved to think in terms of a public undertaking to develop this energy, then the interest rate may not be so important. It may be possible for the government to obtain and provide the capital for this development at a rate much lower than the present prevailing rate for the welfare of the Atlantic provinces and the people who live in those provinces.

• (2:30 p.m.)

The second point I want to make is that it seems there is a lack of imagination both in the report and in the minds of the government in accepting the report. The government seems to be overlooking the obvious importance of the fact that tidal power can be developed free of any environmental consequences or, to put it in simple English, free of stinking pollution. That seems to me in the long run to be a very important consideration. A very large expenditure in developing tidal power may well be justified in order to have a source of energy that is free of the effects of air pollution, which is not the case with thermal energy generating plants.

If I am correct in my reading of the report, this development would take a number of years. I think it mentioned five to nine years. It may well be that seven, eight, or nine years from now Canada, as a whole, would be grateful beyond description for having a power generating capacity in the Atlantic provinces that would not pollute the air around those areas, including a section of the United States as well.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the thing that perhaps disturbed me most about the minister's statement, and I say this to him very seriously, is that he presented no alternatives. He talked blithely about getting the existing generating companies to produce sufficient and surplus capacity. He talked blithely about the need for developing efficient thermal generating plants. He talked blithely about present utility planning. None of these things