

*Atlantic Provinces Power Development***AFTER RECESS**

The committee resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. Hansell: Mr. Chairman, I just slipped through the doorway and reached my seat in time. Since second reading has been passed and we are in the committee stage I would ask the minister if he has given any consideration to what some of us described as a discriminatory element in the bill with respect to it not being all-embracing. When the minister made his comments during the committee stage he did not cover that particular point.

I listened very attentively to what the Minister of Veterans Affairs had to say on this point this afternoon while the bill was being given second reading and I must confess that I do not think I have ever heard the hon. gentleman when he was in any better form than when he was speaking at that stage of this bill. However, I think perhaps he misinterpreted the element of discrimination that some of us have mentioned. The hon. member for Moose Mountain dealt with it this afternoon, I spoke along the same line yesterday and the hon. member for Bow River referred to it some days ago. We did not mean that it was discriminatory in the sense that while it helped the maritimes it would work to the disadvantage of the other provinces; we did not mean it was discriminatory in that sense at all. What we meant was that it is discriminatory in the sense that the same bill could have been made all-embracing, giving to the maritimes all that the present bill gives but at the same time offering to the other provinces the opportunity of coming under the measure if they so desired.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs this afternoon used words to the effect that some of the other provinces perhaps do not need this sort of legislation and he referred to Alberta with its resources of oil, gas, hydroelectric power and the rivers and streams there. I might remind him of a point which he perhaps did not study sufficiently, that we have thermal power plants located right in the province of Alberta in spite of the fact that we have gas and oil, rivers and streams and hydroelectric power. We have a thermal plant at Forestburg which is considerable in size and which was built at a cost of over \$5 million, I believe. This plant provides electricity for many miles around that community.

The reason I spoke on the discriminatory features of the bill is that in my constituency we have a vast coal mining area that is depressed. Coal would be available for thermal power if a power plant were built in that particular area. The province of Alberta may

[Mr. Speaker.]

not be depressed but its coal mining areas are and I believe that if it were geographically possible to put all the coal mining areas of Alberta in one place you could drop the province of New Brunswick into that area. In other words, the entire province of New Brunswick is smaller in physical area than would be the sum total of the coal mining areas of Alberta if grouped in one place. As far as depressed localities are concerned, the coal mining areas of the province of Alberta are just as depressed as is the province of New Brunswick.

Let me stress again that we do not wish to convey the impression that we are reluctant to see assistance offered to the province of New Brunswick. We are eager that this be done and we are in favour of the measure before us but we believe it would be far more palatable to the people of Canada, and the Conservative party would show a greater national spirit if the bill were made all-embracing. I should like the minister to comment on that particular point if he will.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Mr. Chairman, I can only repeat what I said earlier in relation to any thermal proposition, hydro proposition or transmission lines in the province of Alberta. The only thing I could add to what the Prime Minister has already said is that they would have to show a need for cheaper power and demonstrate the inability of the province to obtain the funds, and meet the various other criteria I mentioned. That is the situation in a nutshell.

Mr. Hansell: I do not want the minister to misunderstand me. I do not think we want power or hydro in Alberta but if a thermal plant were established in the Crow's nest pass it could generate electricity for the purpose of exporting it to the United States where there are large cities. It is not that we need the power nor that we want more hydro power at this time. It is simply that there is a principle involved here. The province of Alberta and all the other provinces should be able to make application and come under the measure if the provinces desired to do so.

Mr. Lesage: Subsidized power for export to the United States? I understand that under the provisions of the agreement to be signed the province would have to distribute the coal subventions to the operators including private operators. Could the minister tell the committee what will be the test or what will be the system of distributing these subventions to the operators of the power plants?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Mr. Chairman, for obvious reasons we asked the provinces to take charge of this very important matter.