

terms of today's realities, realities that changed drastically in the early 1970s after the advent on the world scene of the OPEC phenomenon.

The member for St. John's West talked about gas moving from western Canada through the pipeline, so why not electricity. Mr. Speaker, where has the hon. member been? On June 22 the minister in the House, I believe, gave notice that it is the intention of the government to rectify that situation. It is the intention of the government, through the energy security act, to provide that the National Energy Board have the same powers in respect of the transmission of electricity as it does in respect of the transmission of natural gas. We have given notice that we intend to do that. Mr. Speaker, at such time as we do, and I expect it will be in the reasonably near future, I hope we will have the unqualified support of the hon. member for St. John's West. It will go a long way, not the whole way, to address the issue he identified today in this important resolution.

The hon. member for St. John's West during his speech today also mentioned the so-called joint proposal involving the hydro development in Labrador, the joint proposal that would have involved Mr. Lévesque at the time of the Lesage administration in Quebec and Mr. Smallwood on the Newfoundland side. As often is the case, Mr. Speaker, my good friend for St. John's West conveniently forgot to mention an essential component of that particular joint deal. He forgot to mention that an integral part of the proposal was an alteration of the Labrador boundary between the province of Quebec and the province of Newfoundland. The then Quebec minister of energy, Mr. Lévesque, wanted access to the headwaters of five rivers that have their headwaters in what is now Newfoundland-Labrador but flow through the province of Quebec to the ocean.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the deal, they were looking to alter the Quebec-Labrador boundary. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that my good friend from St. John's West does not understand Newfoundland politics at all if he is advocating a position that would in any way toy for one fraction of a centimetre with that boundary between Newfoundland and Quebec. In advocating that particular position, harking back to the day when we could have had a joint proposal, I am sure he is not for a moment giving credence to the idea that any sensible, sane, Newfoundlander who is still alive and kicking would stand idly by and allow a premier of any province to toy and tamper with the boundary between Newfoundland and Quebec. That is the kind of half truth, Mr. Speaker, we have come to expect from the member for St. John's West. It is unfortunate. We have before us a case involving the development of hydro in Newfoundland where all of us in this House, irrespective of party, irrespective of what part of the country we come from, must be able to subscribe to the principle of fair play, and to the concept that a province of Canada, be it Newfoundland or some other, ought to have the right, without question, to move its product to market, whether that product be electricity or something else.

Newfoundland Hydro

If the Canadian federation means anything, it should certainly mean the right of the people of Newfoundland or the people of any other province to move their product to market, without obstruction and without interference, without having to ask the permission of another province of this country. In this particular case, it so happens that the nature of the commodity is such that it has to be moved in a way that is different from the movement of commodities by rail, ocean or air. This happens to be electricity. We happen to need an immobile, physical structure across another province to get that product to market, either in another province of Canada or in a state of the United States.

● (1650)

Mr. Speaker, should that make it any different in terms of the basic right of the people of a province to have their products, produced by their own sweat and toil, moved to market? That is the principle. I defy anyone in this House, no matter what the party or where the hon. member comes from, whether Newfoundland, Quebec or any other province in this country, to stand up and tell me that he or she is against the principle of having the free movement of goods and services, the free movement of products from place of production to place of consumption. That is the principle. We will disagree on the mechanism. We will have a dialogue, partisan and otherwise, on how it ought to be achieved; but no one can argue the principle which is embodied in the resolution of the hon. member for St. John's West, that is, the principle of moving, without obstruction or impediment, a product of a particular province to that province's market for that particular product.

I had hoped there could be more time to speak on this particular motion so that we could allow hon. members from all parts of this country, from all sides of this House, from all parties, to stand up and take a position on this important issue, because I submit to Your Honour that the issue is considerably larger than some infighting between two neighbouring provinces of this country. The issue is whether we in this House will stand by and allow, even by implication or default, interference with the free movement of goods and services. That is an issue which is addressed in the charter of rights which will shortly be before this House again. I implicitly believe in the issue. I do not believe I have the corner on the market on that one. Knowing hon. members of this House as I do, I happen to believe that every hon. member supports that principle. It is so fair and so sensible that I wonder how anyone could be against it.

Let us not see it as only a fight between Newfoundland and Quebec. I understand what the hon. member for St. John's West and the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway have been saying. I understand that every politician, whether from Quebec, Newfoundland or anywhere else, tends to see things very much from his own vantage point. However, I believe there is an opportunity here to take this out of its potential parochial context and to address it as a principle which is as sacred as Canadianism itself. It is as sacred as the Canadian confederation that there cannot be any thought entertained for