

*Atlantic Provinces Power Development*

than eight years, so she must see her way clear to paying it back within that time. I do not feel, therefore, that part of this bill should be criticized.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee and reported.

**Mr. Speaker:** When shall the bill be read a third time?

**Mr. Fleming:** Now, by leave.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** By leave.

**Mr. Fleming** moved the third reading of the bill.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

**POWER****ATLANTIC PROVINCES—LEGISLATION RESPECTING THERMAL PROJECTS**

**Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources)** moved the second reading of Bill No. 244, to provide assistance in respect of electric power development in the Atlantic provinces.

He said: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this short bill as stated is "to assist in making available in the Atlantic provinces electric power for industrial purposes in a suitable quantity and at a lower cost". This seems to set forth the purpose quite clearly and succinctly. The responsibility for the provision of electric energy is basically that of the provinces, municipalities and industry. There are areas, however, such as the Atlantic provinces, which do not enjoy the same benefits as other parts of Canada for the production of electric energy at low cost. In such a case it has been recognized by both sides of this house that some form of assistance is required. The purpose of this bill is to help the provinces of the Atlantic region to obtain more electric energy at a cheaper rate than has hitherto been possible. By this means, industry will be attracted, more jobs will be available for Canadians of the Atlantic region, and a higher standard of living should follow a general lowering of electric energy cost. The bill now before this house is a part only of the total program to assist the Atlantic region in achieving this desirable objective. I shall not speak here of the aid proposed for Beechwood which was discussed separately.

It is desirable at the outset, Mr. Speaker, to make it abundantly clear that this power development bill is intended to apply to the four provinces of the Atlantic region. The bill proposed is enabling legislation. It authorizes

[Mr. Montgomery.]

the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, with the approval of the governor in council, to enter into agreements with the government of any Atlantic province to provide assistance in the generation of electric power in the province by steam-driven generators and the control and transmission of electric energy. What is to be contained in these agreements is set forth in the bill. Canada will build the power projects, namely thermal units and transmission facilities, and will sell them to the province. It is provided that Canada may undertake to extend or to complete power projects already under way in a province and to sell them to the province or, alternatively, Canada may advance funds for such purposes on a repayment basis by the province.

Naturally any such agreement will contain an undertaking by the province to operate any project completed under the agreement and to reimburse the federal government. In this manner the provinces can obtain modern power facilities at less cost than they would ordinarily have to pay and at no loss whatsoever to the federal treasury.

These are briefly the elements of the bill now being considered by this house. It was my privilege, Mr. Speaker, to give a good deal of background information on this bill at the resolution stage on January 8 and 9 last which, I expect, need not be repeated here. It might therefore be more profitable for me to address myself to some of the comments which were made by a number of hon. members who expressed the hope that I would give them answers to their questions or information on points they raised. This I shall now attempt to do in general terms.

I indicated on January 9 that one of the differences between the Atlantic provinces power development bill now before this house and the promises of the former government was that the measure now before the house extends to the four Atlantic provinces, while the former minister of finance's offer and the promises of the hon. member for Montmagny-L'Islet (Mr. Lesage), when minister of northern affairs and national resources, extended only to the two provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. This seemed to surprise the hon. member for Montmagny-L'Islet. I have gone over this member's statement in the house on April 9, 1957, with some care, Mr. Speaker, and I can find references only to the "maritime provinces" and specifically to two provinces only, the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, which were the only two mentioned in this context by the former government.

However that may be, this government proposes to extend the offer of assistance to the