

*Atlantic Provinces Power Development*

I think all hon. members will know that the supply of electric power in the province of Saskatchewan is completely under public ownership, that in 1944 the provincial government took over the existing private power lines. Since that date the provincial government has developed the supply of power for the people of the towns and cities under the system of public ownership. That, of course, would conform with the requirements of this bill. At this time I am happy to say we are building, also under public ownership, a \$40 million thermal plant at Estevan. That plant is going to use a considerable amount of coal and by 1965 it will be producing approximately 75,000 kilowatts of electricity and using in the neighbourhood of one million tons of lignite coal a year. This whole matter is of tremendous importance to my constituents and to my province.

The production of electrical energy for thermal power is certainly competitive with hydro or any other type of power. It is felt in Saskatchewan that by 1965 when our plant is in full operation we will be producing electricity at the Estevan plant at a cost of about four-tenths of a cent per kilowatt.

The province of Saskatchewan is the hub of the provinces being centrally located and while it is true that today we do not have large concentrations of population the province has a great future. The fact that it is geographically situated in the centre of Canada warrants a forward look in respect to resource development and the establishment of secondary industries.

We are doubly blessed in my constituency with new oil developments. What is probably one of the largest potential oil fields on the North American continent is situated in my constituency and there are approximately 700 producing wells at the present time. If we had conscientious and purposeful planning, the kind of planning visualized by the C.C.F. movement, we would be able to look forward to the time when it might be possible to use right on the spot the resources we have in that area. Certainly we have both the potential power and the other natural resources. We are ideally suited for thermal power plants and for secondary industry. If we could get a federal government that would take into cognizance the fact that we should have national planning on an equitable basis it would be possible to attract secondary industry to the province of Saskatchewan to a greater extent than has been possible to date. The establishment of such industry there would complement our agricultural economy and would reduce our dependence

[Mr. McCullough.]

on the vagaries and whims of the weather which so greatly affects the agricultural industry.

I urge that the minister and government approach this whole question in a statesmanlike manner. It is not good to play one part of Canada against another in this age of technocracy and automation and to bring before this house measures which have the effect of playing one part of Canada against another as is the case in the bill before us. I support this bill because I want the Atlantic provinces to have all the assistance this government is able to give them but I also support the principle that it should be extended to include all the provinces. The terms of the agreements which are to be made with the various provinces should not be rigid and fixed contracts in respect to the interest rate. At the present time we are in a period when borrowing is difficult and interest rates are high. I hope there will be flexibility in these contracts so that when the provinces, all of which I hope will be included, enter into contracts with the federal government for the construction of these plants the interest rate set out in the contracts will be that which the federal government has to pay for the obtaining of this money. Further, the repayment period of these contracts with the dominion government should be based on a long term, preferably 50 years.

I believe that all the provinces of Canada are a family of provinces. I want to personally feel when I go from place to place that the measures I have supported in this house are those which will benefit my own and the rest of the provinces. I intend to support this bill although as I have already said I am extremely unhappy that the minister and the government have again seen fit to bring before us legislation which does not meet the complete needs of all of Canada but has proposed legislation which in my opinion is somewhat discriminatory.

**Hon. A. J. Brooks (Minister of Veterans Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to speak on this matter because I think it is more important that the bill get through than that there should be a long debate. I also feel that it is a subject matter which speaks for itself.

I have been quite interested in listening to the debate and the arguments which have been advanced by hon. members from various sections of the country. I have listened to debates on this same subject on quite a number of occasions in the past and I was impressed then as I am now with the general opinion of most hon. members from across Canada that this is good legislation deserving of their support.