

Northern Canada Power Commission Act

the equity capital to get something like this started again. They do not, as a rule, spring forth full-blown with all of the uncertainties removed so that one goes to the market and raises money with no risk or uncertainties at all.

That was not the history of the Churchill Falls project. It is a history of great credit, I think, to private enterprise because individual shareholders of whom there are a great many right here in this province did have faith and confidence enough in the project to invest their money when it was not at all certain that all of these things would come to fruition and the project would go forward. Under this régime it is very difficult to see how one could responsibly ask people to do that, much less how one would persuade them if you were going to ask them.

There, in so many words, you have one of the most responsible men in North America in the field of investment saying that, in view of present tax uncertainties and encroachments by governments on areas that rightfully belong to business, such a project as the Churchill Falls Power development which could best be undertaken by private enterprise, would not be possible. This is especially true in view of present uncertainties and the psychological depression rampant in Canada. There, we were talking about a \$1 billion project to develop a major source of power in Canada.

Last week, we heard that the government of Quebec was conducting an investigation into its rivers which flow into James Bay. That government wants to know the potential of Quebec rivers because great, future developments will be necessary on that frontier of Quebec if that province is to harness its resources. It hopes to harvest the benefits of such development. I do not know whether the government plans to move into this area—

An hon. Member: It does.

Mr. Lundrigan: —and dominate it completely. Does it want to control northern Canada and northern Canadian development?

An hon. Member: It does.

Mr. Lundrigan: If that is its plan, that ought to be clearly and effectively spelled out, so that business concerns such as the Yukon Electrical Company can take their investment and go elsewhere. That, precisely, was the conclusion of that company which was of major importance in northern Canada. It concluded that private business, in this area, could do a much more efficient job than the government. Such companies are saying, "If you want us to go from the area, let us know, so we can move out and develop other projects in other parts of the world."

I contend that, in view of legislation such as Bill C-193 which is now before the House, the government has a responsibility to the Canadian people, and especially to those in the north engaged in business, to spell out exactly what are its intentions with regard to the development of the northern part of Canada. That is our last great frontier, a frontier which is eyed with envy by our United States neighbour to the south. It contains resources in abundance, resources which will loom large in my opinion, in the future of Canada.

The amendment suggested by the hon. member for Yukon and moved by the hon. member for Peace River

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

(Mr. Baldwin) would, if adopted, have the effect of opening up this matter for wider discussion. We could thoroughly explore the implications of the legislation that has been put forward. I submit that the House wishes to give this matter a much more thorough examination, so that the full implications of this kind of legislation for the northern part of Canada and especially for the Yukon Territory which, I submit, at the moment is being disadvantageously affected can be determined. Some hon. members think that what is being proposed is more or less an experiment with government control in northern Canada. If the experiment is successful, then I suppose the government will use it as an example for bringing about other types of control in northern Canada. If that happens, we can assume that private business will go elsewhere to invest its funds.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Orange) yesterday said, as reported at page 2603 of *Hansard* the right hand column:

I am concerned that our study of this bill may be one of the few opportunities to really understand and know something about the Northern Canada Power Commission and the question of power in the territories. I suggest that perhaps this bill is begging the issue. I believe it is begging the issue of private power versus public power. I believe it is begging the issue of how we can ensure power development throughout northern Canada.

He went on to say that he hoped that an independent commission would be set up to look into the broad question of private versus public power, the functions of NCPC generally, and the like. I see the hon. member present in the House and I say to him that this amendment, if accepted, would do just what he advocated yesterday. It will enable the standing committee to do more than merely consider a few functions relating to the bill before us. It will enable the hon. member in committee to advance amendments which, if accepted, would enable his objectives to be accomplished by the House on the report of the committee. I urge him, and all others of like mind on the government side, to accept the amendment that has been advanced. No one is opposing, at this stage, the referral of this matter to the committee. What we want in committee is the authority from the House for the broadest and fullest possible inquiry into the functions of NCPC. The only way that can be done is for the House to accept the amendment before it. I did not have the opportunity yesterday to place one or two items before the House. I propose to do that now.

● (4:00 p.m.)

I agree with the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Orange), and other members who have spoken on the bill that the chairman of the Northern Canada Power Commission should not be the same person as the deputy minister of the department. It is the minister, deputy minister and other departmental officials who formulate the policy which NCPC follows. We will get shallow denials of that. The government will say that the policies are formulated by NCPC and that in most cases, approval is sought from the minister. I think we must be practical