

*Atlantic Provinces Power Development*

borders mine on the north, and of course he is one of the members who come from my province.

The minister, and I think all hon. members of this house, will realize that in 1944 we in Saskatchewan had the first socialist government in North America. From the very inception of that government we have had purposeful planning in order to utilize the national resources of our province, and we feel that we have to continue into the future with long-term planning. For this reason we must have conscious planning as to how we are going to develop our resources to the best interests of our province. Having that in mind we realize further that we must have national planning if we are going to reach this objective on the national level.

I listened many times to the former member for Cape Breton South when he made some excellent speeches pleading for a national fuel and energy authority in Canada so that our fuel and energy resources might be utilized to the fullest extent. While I think the national coal board has done a rather good job I still believe, especially when we receive a bill such as the one before us, that there is a great and urgent need in this country for a national fuel and energy authority.

I think there are some very good reasons why I should take exception to what I call this discriminatory legislation, and I now wish to make a case for my province. I welcome the legislation, as I think all hon. members do, having in mind our desire to develop our resources and to receive federal assistance. When one realizes that the dominion government takes about 71 per cent of all taxes collected in Canada, leaving only about 13 per cent for the 10 provinces combined and about 16 per cent of the gross taxes collected in Canada for all the municipal governments, it becomes very clear that we do need assistance from the federal government very urgently by way of plans such as this.

I think the province of Saskatchewan is probably far more deserving of this type of assistance than are even the Atlantic provinces. I believe I could challenge the minister with that assertion from the point of view of the income of our province. The people of Saskatchewan have a very static income, due to the fact that in 1944 we had almost 90 per cent of our people dependent either directly or indirectly on income from agriculture. I think all hon. members of this house know full well that the income of the prairie farmer has indeed fluctuated very considerably over the years.

I would like to point out that according to quite authoritative figures, farm income

in December dropped from \$1,090 in 1956 to a low of \$550 in 1957. This per capita farm income in the province of Saskatchewan is one reason why I feel we have a right to ask that this kind of legislation be broadened to include all the provinces. I believe while income is not satisfactory in the Atlantic provinces it is more stable than in the province of Saskatchewan from whence I come.

Another reason I have in mind is that we have some extreme problems in our province. We have a very sparsely settled population over an extreme breadth of territory, people living in broad expanses of thinly populated areas. Consequently this necessitates long power lines to transmit power to people in all parts of our province. A further reason why I think we are entitled to this kind of assistance is the fact that our coal fields where we may get thermal power are in the extreme southern portion of our province, our hydro power is mainly in the northern portion, and our densely populated areas are concentrated more or less in the centre. It can readily be seen that this situation necessitates long power grids in order to supply our people with power.

I would next like to make a case for my constituency. I am proud to represent the constituency of Moose Mountain. I think I can say, not in a boastful way, that we have in my constituency the most potentially rich area in Canada with respect to natural resources. Our coal deposits alone are the largest single known deposits, I believe, in the world. Indeed, approximately 16 per cent to 20 per cent of all the coal mined in Canada comes from my constituency, and we have there a recoverable supply of coal of somewhere in the neighbourhood of 13 billion tons. We have sufficient resources of coal to supply the present power needs of our province for some 2,000 or 3,000 years at the present rate of utilization. We are thus able to supply the area from which I come with cheap power, and coal is also being shipped from the Bienfait coal mines in that area to other parts of our province and to Manitoba.

I do not want to make a case for Manitoba, but I understand that at this time Manitoba has pretty well utilized to the full extent her southern hydro power facilities, and that a plant is being built in Winnipeg and another in Brandon which will use a considerable amount of Bienfait lignite coal. That fact also is of tremendous importance to us. Furthermore, I believe Manitoba will be put to some disadvantage unless it is given assistance under a bill of this nature.