

Atlantic Provinces Power Development

reduce the actual cost of the production of power. The other device is by a subvention on coal, and this subvention on coal is the main factor in reducing the cost of coal to the development of thermal power. On the other side of the sword is the fact that you will help the economic picture in the province of Nova Scotia particularly and, to a lesser degree, that of the province of New Brunswick by providing work for an area of the coal mining industry where the situation has been desperate for many years.

I should like to point out to the hon. member for Macleod the tonnage at stake in this particular amendment. At the present time it is estimated that approximately 950,000 tons of coal are being used in the production of thermal power in those two provinces. It is hoped that the rising demand over the next few years will bring that consumption of coal up to 1,500,000 tons. It is such a small amount of coal for the large and wealthy province of Alberta to try to take away from the miners in Sydney, the miners at Minto and the other miners in this hard-pressed part of Canada by means of an amendment of this sort.

This would be a tragic mistake because it is a small enough help to these hard-pressed areas of Canada; but to try to divide one million tons of coal among all the great coal mining areas of Canada would defeat our purpose. The hon. member for Moose Mountain this afternoon mentioned that Saskatchewan had billions of tons of coal. It would mean just a few tons of coal to each area to help in the problem of making thermal power cheaper in the Atlantic provinces. I do not know what subventions would be required, but you would defeat the primary purpose of what we are doing in the Atlantic power development bill, namely to help the maritime region of Canada—in this particular case the Atlantic provinces—to raise their living standard to some degree. They can only be helped by (a) cheaper power for industry and (b) by subventions on coal and concentrating its benefits all in this one area of Canada. I think I have made the point sufficiently clear. I think the amendment was not put forward in a serious vein as a Canadian would think of proposing an improvement to the economy of Canada. This matter affects the province of Alberta not at all, it is such a small amount, but it is absolutely vital particularly to the province of Nova Scotia and, to a lesser degree, to the province of New Brunswick.

Mr. Lesage: For once, Mr. Chairman, I agree completely with the principle enunciated by the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources. I cannot believe that

the hon. member moved this amendment with any seriousness. Who could think of anything more uneconomic than for the federal government to pay a subvention for Alberta coal in order to land it at Sydney at the same price as that at which coal is landed at Toronto? I believe that is the answer.

An hon. Member: Carrying coals to Newcastle.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): As has been already pointed out, Mr. Chairman, this is a new version of carrying coals to Newcastle. May I say a brief word on the reasons for the stand we shall take on this amendment if the hon. member is serious and if he brings it to a vote. Throughout the whole of this debate we have taken the position that this bill should be broadened to include all the provinces and to include all types of electric power projects. We have reached the point, however, where our requests in those two directions have been denied.

What we are now left with is a bill directed to helping the maritime or Atlantic provinces in connection with thermal projects. If it has reached the point where it is that kind of bill, it would certainly be contrary to its purpose if we were now to suggest that the coal to be used at Minto or at Sydney should be shipped from Estevan or Macleod, with a government subvention paid thereon. If we are going to deal now with a bill for the purpose of being of some assistance to the Atlantic provinces, both in terms of the development of power and in terms of assistance to the coal industry in the maritime provinces, I think we had better leave it at that, and perhaps the hon. member would not press his amendment. There are other ways in which he can seek assistance for the coal industry in western Canada and to which he would find us sympathetic.

Mr. Fleming: I should like to submit to you, Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, that the amendment is not in order. The effect of the amendment would be to reduce a provision of the bill to meaninglessness. The definition in clause 2 (b) would be rendered meaningless by the amendment and I think a later provision in clause 3 of the bill would be meaningless. On that ground the amendment, in my submission, is out of order.

There is in addition another ground, that if the effect of the amendment is not that which I contend it is then inevitably the effect of the amendment would be to increase the charges on the crown. The definition in clause 2 (b) has reference to an expression that is to be found in a later clause, namely clause 3, subclause 2 (d) which

[Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle).]