

*Northern Canada Power Commission Act***SOCIAL SECURITY**CONFERENCE WITH PROVINCIAL MINISTERS—REPORT OF
SENATE COMMITTEE ON POVERTY

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the very important conference which the minister is to hold with the provincial ministers on the twenty-fifth with regard to social security, can he advise us if he has received the report of the Senate Committee on Poverty as it will have such serious implications for the conference?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): No, Mr. Speaker. To my knowledge the report of the Senate Committee on Poverty has not been completed.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Simcoe North wishes to ask a supplementary question. With the consent of the House, perhaps the hon. member might be allowed to ask his supplementary.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Rynard: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us why the kind of assistance provided to welfare recipients cannot also be provided for old age pensioners who, because of government policy, have joined the ranks of the poor?

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**NORTHERN CANADA POWER COMMISSION ACT**

AMENDMENTS RESPECTING MEMBERS FUNDS FOR INVESTIGATION OF PROJECTS, ADVANCES FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development) moved that Bill C-193, to amend the Northern Canada Power Commission Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

• (3:00 p.m.)

Mr. Judd Buchanan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, the Northern Canada Power Commission is a Crown corporation operating under the authority of an act of Parliament known as "an act respecting the supplying of electrical power and other public utilities in northern Canada".

[Mr. Speaker.]

Mr. Nielsen: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not think the Parliamentary Secretary should begin by misleading the House. I do not charge him with doing this intentionally. The NCPC is not a Crown corporation, but a Crown agency.

Mr. Speaker: Order please. That is not a point of order. I suspect that the hon. member will be taking part in the debate. He may want to make the point at that time.

Mr. Buchanan: Created in 1948 as the Northwest Territories Power Commission, its name was changed and its operations expanded by an amendment in 1956. The commission is empowered to survey utility requirements and to construct and operate public utility plants in the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory. The act provides that the commission is responsible to and subject to the direction of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the governor in council. In particular, the rates charged the general public by the commission are subject to approval by the governor in council. In addition to the commission's facilities, there are small government-owned installations in the north operated by departments of the federal government or by the territorial government which supply power to airports and smaller communities throughout the territories.

The federal government, largely through the Northern Canada Power Commission, owns approximately 75 per cent of the generating capacity in the north, with 10 per cent being controlled by three private utility companies and 15 per cent being controlled and operated by private organizations primarily associated with mining operations. During its first fiscal year of operation, the commission's operating budget totalled approximately \$231,000. Consistent with growth in the north, the commission's operating budget this year will exceed \$10 million. In the ten-year period 1961 to 1970, the generation of electric power by the commission has more than tripled, from 120 million to 383 million kilowatt hours. In 1961 the commission operated 10 plants; today it operates 22 plants in 20 locations. During this period gross revenue has increased from \$3 million to \$9.7 million. It can therefore be said that the commission has kept pace with northern growth. In these exciting days of northern development, the commission finds itself on the threshold of a new and accelerated period of expansion.

The private utility companies in the north are mainly involved in retailing power to a number of communities and do relatively little generation of power. These private companies are virtually free to set their own rates. At present there are no territorial utilities commissions in operation which would be responsible for regulating their rate-setting practices and reviewing their profit margins. In the Northwest Territories a territorial ordinance was passed in 1963 authorizing the establishment of a public utilities board, but this board has not yet been set up. A similar ordinance died on the other paper of the Yukon Council in 1968.

The Yukon Electrical Company Ltd. is a private utility company concerned with the generation and distribution of power in the Yukon. In 1958 the company became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Canadian Utilities Limited