

● (1630)

I agree with my colleague on another point. We discussed the \$50,000 limit in committee and agreed that it is too low. The replacement of a few telephone poles, or a machinery bearing in a power unit, could easily eat up that \$50,000. As my colleague said, we do not oppose increasing that amount.

Although we want the commission to be given adequate powers, we are concerned because, apparently, neither parliament nor the cabinet will be empowered to keep a close eye on the commission, which is not a Crown corporation. I think the situation is unique and this departure represents a colonial type of administrative policy. My colleague was quite right. The people of the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories exercise little enough power as it is over their own affairs. Parliament is the only tribunal in which the elected representatives of the people of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon can be heard. Is it not strange that only one member represents the Yukon, an area encompassing 207,000 square miles and containing a population of 20,000, and another hon. member represents the Northwest Territories, an area ten times larger?

These northern parts are the resource storehouse of our country. The people of the north are involved too little in governing their own part of this country. We do not serve the interests of Canadians if we take from the people of the north some of their already limited powers, some of their remaining rights. One hears talk about development in the Mackenzie Valley, about the development of northern resources. The north is our storehouse. Resource development in the Yukon and Northwest Territories will increase in the future. We must protect the rights of the people of the area and their interests. We are not doing this adequately.

Personally, I should prefer to see the number of commission members increased to seven, although we are prepared to accept the number suggested. We think more northerners should serve on the commission and be involved in the government of the north.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we insist that parliament, or the cabinet, should exercise control over the actions of civil servants or appointees, in some cases political appointees, who will make serious, far-reaching and all encompassing decisions about the provision of energy and power to the peoples of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I intend to make some brief remarks on the motion before the House. I had the opportunity of attending the committee meetings when Northern Canada Power Commission representatives appeared before the committee with representatives of the government. The committee was told that the purposes of the bill were twofold. First, the number of commission members is to be increased from three to five. We agreed with this proposal, although we would have preferred the number of commissioners to be increased to seven. Second, there is to be a change in the rate zones. We agreed with this proposal, although we have some reservations about how the rate zone changes will be administered. We understood that the balance of the amendments

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were simple, house-keeping amendments. However, having examined the particular clause with which we are now dealing, it strikes me that we were taken.

The limit of \$50,000 included in the original legislation is to be removed and the commission is to be given unlimited power to incur expenditures for maintenance and capital projects. I suggest that this is wrong. There must be some control. At present, good people are serving on the commission. All the same, there must be some limitation to their powers. The hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) said he would be agreeable to increasing the amount from \$50,000 to \$250,000. I agree. In this day and age, \$50,000 will buy little enough. It is only fair to increase the amount, provided there is some limitation. Also, the commission should be responsible to the Governor in Council or to parliament.

I urge the minister to consider amending subsection 6(3). I want the limitation contained in the subsection to remain, but I want the amount of \$50,000 mentioned to be increased to some higher figure. That would be only fair and would leave control vested in the Governor in Council. We, on my side of the House, cannot move such an amendment, for technical reasons. Our previous attempts in this regard were outflanked. For that reason I urge the minister to consider moving an amendment of which most members on my side of the House approve.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I find myself in an unusual position, opposing the motion of the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen). I oppose suggested amendments to the bill before us, on two grounds. They relate to our reasons for representing our people as members of parliament. We must ask two questions. First, how much control should parliament maintain over the running of the affairs of this country? Second, how can we expedite the transfer of powers by which people of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon can control their own affairs?

In my view the amendments proposed by the hon. member for Yukon avoid the economic issue. Apparently the hon. member prefers to let the Governor in Council retain economic control over the affairs of the Northern Canada Power Commission. I say that in considering this we should consider fundamentals.

The first question we must consider is the extent to which this House, or this government, controls Crown agencies. Federal governments of the day have established 59 Crown agencies and Crown corporations. These agencies and corporations are given delegated powers and are empowered to carry out certain functions. These bodies have been established in such a way that parliament finds it difficult to control the powers, delegated and otherwise, given to them. The result is that when ministers have attempted to tell the truth in this House, they have been destroyed. I cite what has happened to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand).

Despite warnings by members on my side of the House, parliament in 1967 delegated complete powers over transportation to an independent commission known as the Canadian Transport Commission.

Mr. Nielsen: Of which Jack Pickersgill was the first chairman.