

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, if I have said anything offensive to the hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. MacInnis) I sincerely apologize. I had no desire to offend him in any way.

Mr. Gauthier (Portneuf): Be careful, he is cross.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister made it very clear, and the hon. member for St. John's West underlined it in the most emphatic way, that they are not very well acquainted with the situation that obtains in Newfoundland. I am truly sorry that the hon. member for St. John's West, the Minister without Portfolio, is not in his place this evening and I think perhaps before I finish he will understand why many of my constituents said they could not understand why the hon. member for St. John's West had been made the minister for the outports because his knowledge of the outports does not seem to be very exact.

The true nature of our problem in Newfoundland is exactly as it was stated on an early stage of this measure by the hon. member for Burin-Burgeo. It is not that we need transmission lines from the existing power plants because the capacity of the existing power plants is already being used in Newfoundland to the practical limit. I realize that in saying this I am contradicting what was said by the Minister without Portfolio in his speech. I am not saying this on my own authority or on my own responsibility. This is the best information I have been able to get about the situation, and I believe it to be exact and I think that one of the best evidences that it is exact is that the Minister without Portfolio himself said—

Mr. Baskin: What did Joe say?

Mr. Pickersgill: Oh, I will come to that; I will satisfy the hon. gentleman's curiosity in that regard. The Minister without Portfolio said that the power company in St. John's was considering an extension of its thermal plant at the present time and he also implied—this is something about which I would like to ask the minister at the committee stage—that if the company were to extend that thermal plant it could get assistance under this legislation. I have not understood that the legislation was that extensive but it may be and I would be interested in having that matter explored a little further at the committee stage. The fact that the power company in St. John's considers it necessary to extend this thermal plant is surely the best evidence that there is no surplus power to be distributed in the rural parts of the hon. member's own constituency.

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I do not know the rural parts of the hon. member's constituency very well, nor do I pretend to, but I have been told—I will tell the hon. gentleman by whom—by the provincial member for the provincial constituency of Ferryland that at Trepassey, a place in the hon. member's constituency which the hon. member mentioned, it would be better to develop hydro power on the spot on the Northwest river than it would be to transmit it via transmission line from the other parts of the southern shore even if there were power to transmit; that the present capacity of the existing plants is taxed almost to the full and if a transmission line were built in fact there would be no power available to transmit without taking power away from some other place where it is also needed.

In other words, even in the hon. member's constituency—I am told this by the provincial member for St. Mary's who also happens to be here on national business at the moment—that the same situation is true in St. Mary's bay. There are some other parts of Newfoundland with which I have no hesitation in saying I have a lot more experience than the hon. member for St. John's West appears to have. I was absolutely flabbergasted, if that is a parliamentary term—

Mr. Baskin: You flabbergast easily.

Mr. Pickersgill:—when the hon. member for St. John's West suggested that you could build a transmission line from Lockston in Trinity bay to the north side of Bonavista bay to give power to that area. It is unbelievable that a Rhodes scholar, a minister of the crown, who has lived all his life in Newfoundland should know so little about the most important part of Newfoundland, namely Bonavista bay on the northeast coast, that he would not know how utterly ridiculous that proposition is.

Mr. Churchill: How long have you lived there?

Mr. Pickersgill: I have kept my eyes open when I have been there.

Mr. Fraser: And you have kept them closed while here.

Mr. Robinson: You transient.

Mr. Pickersgill: I do not keep my eyes closed too much either here or there. It seems to me that no worse example could be picked than that which was used. In the first place the power that is developed at Lockston is very badly needed in the immediate area.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member please permit a question.