

which must be discussed in committee. When the minister and his officials appear before the committee it may be possible for him to indicate whether he is prepared to have a task force examine the matters referred to in this debate. In conclusion I wish to make one point that may not have much relevance to the bill under discussion but which must be considered in connection with potential power development. There are many beauty spots in the north where a conflict arises between the developer and the conservationist. I give one example of this. We have already witnessed the fuss that occurred as the result of the declaration by one arm of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development of a region on the east side of Great Slave Lake as an area suitable for a national park, an area in regard to which a second arm of the department, the Northern Canada Power Commission, had just completed an expensive study of power development on the Lockhart River. I have visited the South Nahanni, which is one of the areas where such potential conflict may arise. I hope that a decision will be made by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, taking into account the interests of all parties concerned, to create a national park in that absolutely magnificent area. It is practically the last wild river area in Canada.

I appeal to the minister and his Parliamentary Secretary to listen to the suggestions that will be made by hon. members during the committee study of this bill.

**Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris):** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious from the comments of the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) and of the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Orange) that this bill does not deal, in the comprehensive terms required, with problems of northern development, particularly with respect to the subject of power in the north. It is for this reason that I enter the discussion at this time.

● (5:10 p.m.)

I think the hon. member for Yukon has offered a solution for the dilemma in which both these hon. gentlemen, in light of their particular concern for northern development, find themselves. It provides the vehicle whereby the subject matter may be referred back to committee of the whole House, and something more adequate to deal with the subject of power at this most critical juncture in the entire program of northern development might be worked out.

As has been pointed out by the spokesmen who took part in the procedural discussion this afternoon, under our former rules we had the opportunity to debate, in a preliminary way, the propositions and proposals of government at the resolution stage. This useful device was automatically available to Parliament. Although we have streamlined parliamentary procedures to the extent that the participation of private members of the House has been considerably downgraded or, in some cases, is no longer possible, I think that in a matter as important as this we might be well advised to adopt the solution that has been constructively proposed by the hon. member for Yukon.

23786—24½

#### *Northern Canada Power Commission Act*

I am disappointed, as is the hon. member for Yukon, that the minister is not present this afternoon. We are given far too few opportunities to discuss the problems and prospects of northern development. There is a dramatic story to be told in this regard, in light of developments which have taken place in both the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories over the past decade. Perhaps the minister's absence from the House this afternoon, when a topic of such priority is being discussed, indicates that he too is not greatly elated by what is contemplated in the legislation before us.

Without doubt, the question of power is fundamental to the entire subject of northern development. The thorough investigation recommended by the hon. member for Northwest Territories is long overdue in this respect. I know, as one who had responsibility for northern development during an important period in the expansion of the department, that we considered power to be of the essence inasmuch as the main potential in northern development is in the area of resources. The development of the natural resources of the north which, as we now know, exist in abundance will draw heavily upon the power potential of the north. In particular, it will draw substantially on hydroelectric power. There are a great many undeveloped sites in both the Yukon and Northwest Territories which have substantial hydroelectric power potential.

The hon. member for Yukon has outlined the gradual evolution, if I may use that term, of the functions of that body now known as the Northern Canada Power Commission. I should like to expand further on that developmental picture. The NCPC has been used in other areas of Canada where the federal government has become involved in power developments specifically designed to assist resource development. I am referring to areas such as Newfoundland and the Atlantic provinces. As the hon. member for Yukon pointed out, it is significant to note that the name of the commission when it was first organized in 1948 was the Northwest Territories Power Commission. That is when there was urgent need for public involvement in the supply of power to the isolated areas of the Northwest Territories because private enterprise had not yet moved into this area of northern Canada.

The NWT Power Commission, as it was known in those days, moved into the Yukon Territory in 1950. In 1956 the name was changed to Northern Canada Power Commission. There was a further change, in 1958, in the functions of the NCPC. This occurred when the Atlantic Provinces Power Development Act was passed in this House. The NCPC, as I have already intimated, was the federal vehicle used to bring considerable benefits to the province of New Brunswick. I see the former Premier of that province, the hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. Flemming), smiling in approval at my reference to the assistance that was provided in his province at that time. It was also provided in Newfoundland, in connection with the Baie D'Espoir project which now is a reality in Newfoundland and is bringing considerable encouragement to the development program in that area.