

Northwest Territories Power Commission

Accordingly I am completely in accord with the resolution, and hope to have the opportunity of speaking in more detail when the bill is introduced. I am particularly interested in ample power for the Yukon, and I feel that the distribution of power developed by the power commission should be undertaken by the private facilities now available. I believe this has been the policy of the power commission in the past and I hope it will continue to be so. In other words, the commission would supply power on a wholesale basis and not adopt a policy of retail distribution and sale. This amendment will permit all departments of the government to have the benefit of the power commission's advice and action with respect to their own particular power problems in the north, particularly the departments of northern affairs and Indian affairs and also crown companies.

I am very much in favour of the resolution, as it will be of undoubted benefit to the development of northern Canada.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Chairman, the introduction of these amendments indicates, I think, an increased interest and determination on the part of the department to carry on development in the Northwest Territories, and from that point of view I welcome them. I hope these amendments will result in putting the corporation in a position to carry on power development in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon to better advantage than it has been able to do in the past.

There are five separate matters dealt with in the resolution. I believe the minister commented on all except one, and I should like to ask a few questions with respect to what he had to say about them. The minister said this particular organization had some activities in the Yukon. I was not clear whether he meant that it had activities in the Yukon at the present time or that it was proposed that it would have activities in the Yukon in the future. If it has activities in the Yukon at the present time, perhaps he can tell us what those are or, if it is a proposal for the future, what the proposal is.

The second part of the resolution will give the corporation the power to deal with the utilities other than electric power utilities, and in that connection the minister gave as an example the proposed development at Aklavik. I think that development is a good one and it certainly seems reasonable that the commission should lay the water, sewer and heating pipes all in the one pipe, shall we say.

Mr. Lesage: Tube.

Mr. Harkness: The fact that they are providing electric power naturally makes them

the proper people to put in the other piping and things of that sort. I wondered, as a matter of fact, whether this change was also designed to put the commission in a position to deal with the installation of natural gas facilities, in view of the fact that there has been a discovery of gas in the Northwest Territories. I know of at least one gas well that has been discovered there and I have no doubt there will be more. In view of the heating difficulties that exist in that part of the country because of the climate I think anything that can be done to provide heating facilities for the communities there by using natural gas is something which the department should certainly prosecute as vigorously as possible. Such action might very well provide one answer to the fuel problem that prevails in that northern area. Possibly the minister would comment on whether anything is proposed along that line, and if there is any immediate prospect of anything being done as far as the use of gas in the Northwest Territories is concerned.

The third change suggested will give the company power to operate outside the territories. The minister mentioned a possible development at Fort Smith, which is just south of the Alberta boundary and which development would extend south from there into Alberta. In addition, I understand that in the northern part of Alberta considerable water power resources are available from which I believe it is possible to develop about a quarter of a million horsepower through using natural falls or rapids existing there.

I wondered whether giving this authority was connected with the fact that this site exists so close to the Northwest Territories, and whether there was on the part of the council of the Northwest Territories or of this company an idea of developing that particular waterpower site, which I believe is perhaps the largest waterpower site immediately available in the Northwest Territories region. Speaking more particularly, I believe it is the closest one of considerable size to the Yellowknife district and the mineral areas surrounding the lake there.

The fourth matter is this. In the resolution it is stated that one purpose is "to provide a fund to enable the commission to carry on investigations". From what the minister said I was not clear as to what those investigations are and what the amount of this fund is supposed to be. I think some mention was made of \$50,000, but I was not clear as to what is the nature of the investigations or what those investigations are connected with. I presume the investigations would be in connection with sources for power development and things along that