

Atlantic Provinces Power Development

believe that is where this bill is discriminatory, because the coal mining areas of the other provinces are in a very serious plight today.

I know that history will show that the Conservative party have advocated the development of our natural resources to the point where there should be a nation-wide coal and fuel policy. I do not know whether or not the Borden commission is supposed to come up with something that would save the coal mining industry; I hope so. Let me say that we have a new government now. The present Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, who is sponsoring this bill, is a new minister in this house. He is not new in the political arena, by any means. He is an able man. The party has a number of new members. Over the years the Conservative party have harped over and over again about the development of our natural resources, and have applied that argument to the coal mining industry of Canada.

I recall a few elections ago, when the present Prime Minister's predecessor was out in the province of Alberta. He came down into a coal mining area in which there were rich coal deposits, a type of coal that would be almost equivalent to anthracite. This coal could be obtained from the foothills of the Rocky mountains by the use of scoop shovels. It was not necessary to dig a pit. All you had to do was to build a spur line of railroad for about 20 miles and the coal would have been available through the use of drag line equipment. They call it strip mining. Further south, in the Crowsnest pass area we have all sorts of strip mines.

What did the then leader of the Conservative party say when he was in that area? He spent nearly all his time speaking about coal mining. He said if his party were elected they would see that these rich coal deposits were developed. Oh, yes, he said it with great vigour. I might say that the present Prime Minister was in the same community during the last election campaign although he did not use that theme for his speech. However, the Hon. Mr. Drew did not win that election and his party remained in opposition. I waited in this house to hear him recommend something in respect to the coal mining industry. I waited and I waited. Of course, he is not here now, but I am still waiting. During the first session of that new parliament I reminded him that I had taken cognizance of what he had said during the election campaign. I challenged him, during consideration of the estimates for coal subventions, to state what he would do about bringing into operation a national coal policy. He did not accept the challenge. I suppose he considered me to be a little two by four, sitting in the back

benches, although I was right over there occupying that front seat. So far as the Conservative party of that day was concerned, the whole matter was dropped.

Is the government interested in keeping the coal mining industry in operation in Canada? If they are, here is one tiny shade of help they can give. They can remove that coal mining discriminatory feature of this bill and permit coal to be sold for thermal power, even though it is in that distant province.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre made a recommendation to the minister. He said he was not going to move an amendment but he asked the minister to consider it. In replying the minister said that he appreciated the kindness of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is a very kind man. I am afraid that I am not so kind. I sometimes think that I am a mean man. I think a simple amendment to a clause here would remedy the situation that I have mentioned, and I am going to be mean enough to move an amendment to clause (b). The amendment is:

That clause (b) be amended by striking out the words "eastern" and "Atlantic" and adding at the end of the clause the words "of Canada".

For the sake of clarification may I say that the clause would then read:

(b) "coal" means coal produced in any of the provinces of Canada.

I believe by that simple amendment we would put the coal mining industry of other provinces in the position where they could offer to sell their coal anywhere. I am not saying they would get that market, but they would not feel that they had been left out of the picture altogether. Since subventions are paid for the movement of coal from western Canada to eastern Canada, I believe if the same subventions that are advocated in this bill were added to them, it might—I do not know this; I have not calculated it—put the rest of the coal mining industry in Canada in a competitive position.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): It is not very difficult to make up my mind on this amendment, Mr. Chairman. This amendment would destroy the whole purpose of what we are trying to do in the Atlantic provinces. We are in this bill trying to help this area of Canada which, through no fault of its own, has fallen behind in the economic prosperity of this country. What we are doing is a two edged sword. One edge of the sword is, by all the devices of bringing together hydro and thermal power, by getting the lowest international rates possible and by interconnections between plants and so on, to