

National Energy Board Act (No. 3)

Newfoundland. We all agree, as I believe I heard the hon. member for Joliette agree, that this is not the optimum solution either, from a practical point of view. Although I do not have the exact, up-to-date figures from an economics point of view, I suspect that the figures would show that a separate transmission line across Quebec for Labrador power is marginally economical and that the most economical method would be to pipe the hydroelectric power through the Quebec-Hydro grid to market at a cost which would ensure a fair and reasonable return to Newfoundland. That certainly must be established. I believe that can be done and that it would be the optimum and most economical solution. I hope it can be done by bringing the three governments together.

Today the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) offered his offices to bring together Newfoundland, Quebec and Canada in order to see if an agreement can be worked out which would be beneficial to Newfoundland, Quebec and Canada in the development of the total hydroelectric resource which is so important to all of us. I hope that that can be done. I urge all governments involved to come together co-operatively to seek a common solution.

We are behind this effort as the Government of Canada, financially and otherwise, because we believe it would be a good deal for this country. The Minister of Finance has said that he is prepared to invest money and capital in this project. I hope that the governments can come together to seek that co-operative solution. But if that cannot happen, what we have on the books as of today is legislation which gives equality to Newfoundland. That is the real importance of this legislation. What we are talking about here is a matter of principle that all Canadians hold to be important, the right of a province to develop and sell a resource, the right of equality.

• (1700)

In his speech the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources laid out how he sees the principle of equality applying here. He asked how the people of Quebec would feel with regard to natural gas coming across another province if that province did not agree to have it pass through that province to be received in the province of Quebec. I believe the people of Quebec understand that argument.

Putting aside the present government of Quebec, I believe the people of Quebec are fair and reasonable people. They want equality in this country. They have fought, and rightly so, for equality. My colleagues on this side of the House have fought for equality in language rights. We now have that equality. The language of the two founding peoples of this country are equal. That is the issue here. The people of Quebec appreciate that principle.

The hon. member for Manicouagan (Mr. Maltais) and I share territory in that great area of the Canadian shield which encompasses both Labrador and Quebec. His people in Vermont and my people in Labrador City visit frequently. They talk together and share sports and social activities. There are no barriers there. Sometimes they speak in French, sometimes

in English. The point is they understand and there is no barrier between them. They understand the principle embodied in this bill, and that is equality.

That is all Newfoundland asks. It asks to be equal in law with other provinces which have the right to develop and export a natural resource. We are talking about rights, equality and a chance. What is involved in this bill may not be the optimum solution, but it is important that it be established because it is a matter of rights and equality.

I would not want to delay the establishment of that important principle by this House. Far too long we have put off establishing the principle that hydroelectric development should be equal to natural gas, oil or any other natural resource. I am in favour of this bill being read and voted on as quickly as possible.

We cannot delay this principle or delay equality. We must have it now. In a sense, there has already been a delay. Draft legislation was before this House last spring. Throughout the summer, fall and winter, people and governments had the chance to study what the Government of Canada intended and wanted. That draft legislation was put forward and examined. It could have been commented on. In a sense, there was a delay in the period during which the legislation was examined.

I do not think the people of Quebec would see this as a provocation but rather as a chance to establish equal rights. They understand that principle. From my point of view and that of the people of my province, this bill is very important. It should be debated quickly and voted on without delay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Before recognizing the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. Waddell), perhaps I can make a correction. Earlier I indicated that under the House order covering the energy bills, debate would not continue past 8.07. I have subsequently been advised that is incorrect. In fact, the time will be 7.57.

Also, from recollection I believe, and I will verify it now, that the hon. member who is about to take the floor on behalf of the New Democratic Party will not have more than 29 minutes to speak. I see a nod at the Table. This is the extent of time remaining available to the hon. member's party.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, when you said that I would only have 29 minutes, I noted muted applause in the chamber. I want to speak on Bill C-108 and say on behalf of the New Democratic Party that we are opposed to this bill for three reasons. In the course of my remarks, I will also address some remarks to the adjournment motion.

First, the bill drops the provision which was in the draft bill and the National Energy Program which promised that the degree of Canadian ownership of energy companies wishing to export oil and gas would be a factor in deciding whether an export licence was issued. This is backtracking by the government on the promise to promote Canadianization of the oil industry that was set out in the National Energy Program. I will come back to that in a moment.