

ment between the two provinces and the federal government under which the people of the locality involved would not know what was happening. I do not want our action at the moment to be misunderstood by the people who are most directly concerned in any boundary alteration.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, speaking again on the point of order, I think these questions of substance could best be debated in second reading debate and in committee consideration. My colleague, the parliamentary secretary, will be dealing with the background of the bill. Rather than dealing with the actions of the two provinces concerned and the carrying out of our agreement on a point of order, I think we should consider the bill itself.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Is there disposition to send the bill to committee, or would the House prefer to hear the parliamentary secretary explain the bill?

Mr. Clark (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to continue debate under the guise of spurious points of order, but it should be understood that if the parliamentary secretary speaks at this stage I shall wish to avail myself of the right to speak.

● (1220)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We must now decide whether this bill shall go to the committee without debate. If the parliamentary secretary speaks, the debate will begin and there is no indication how long it may continue. Is the House ready for the question? The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Foster).

Mr. Maurice Foster (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, we are prepared to debate the bill at second reading; we are not in any great rush to send it to committee without debate. Possibly some of the points which members opposite have raised as points of order can be answered at this time, and certainly in more detail in the standing committee. I must say we are very impressed with the kind—

Mr. Peters: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is highly irregular. Either this is without debate, or the debate should be called in the normal manner.

Mr. Speaker: With due respect, we have passed that point. I have already called the bill. I asked if the House was ready for the question, the parliamentary secretary rose and I recognized him. The debate has begun.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, Bill S-13, an act respecting the boundary between the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, which is before us today provides for the proper management of the boundary between the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, especially the sinuous southern section which is defined by the height of land along the Rocky Mountain system. The British North America Act provides the following:

—the Parliament of Canada may from time to time, with the consent of the legislature of any province of the said Dominion increase, diminish

Alberta-B.C. Boundary Act

or otherwise alter the limits of such province upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed to by the said legislature—

The governments of the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia have recently enacted legislation, to be effective upon the enactment of this bill on the Alberta-British Columbia Boundary Act. The provincial acts allow for conversion of the sinuous—height of land—boundary to a conventional boundary marked on the ground by survey monuments connecting a series of straight lines. They provide for changes in the boundary to be approved by the lieutenant governor in council, and they also provide for the survey, maintenance and resolving of disputes related to the boundary. However, these provincial enactments cannot bring about any desired change in their mutual boundary without similar federal legislation. Consequently, this bill is being introduced to provide the federal authority for confirmation and proclamation of any change that may be made.

The provincial acts and the federal bill provide for the establishment of a permanent Alberta-British Columbia boundary commission comprising three commissioners, one each from the three jurisdictions. That is the two provinces and the federal government. The functions of this proposed commission are to survey parts of the sinuous boundary as may be required, resolve disputes which may arise as to the true location of the sinuous boundary and possibly for other reasons, resurvey the surveyed portions as may be deemed necessary, and be responsible for clearing the boundary and for the maintenance of boundary monuments and markers.

Regarding any alterations to the boundary that may result from conversion of a sinuous boundary to a conventional one, the consent of the two provincial legislatures to the alteration is deemed to be given upon approval by the lieutenant governors in council of the two provinces and the consent of parliament is deemed to be given upon declaration of the boundary by the governor in council. Provision is also made for revising or supplementing the boundary map-sheets when any such alteration may be made.

The main purpose of the provincial acts and the federal bill is to enable quick reaction to resolve any doubts or settle any dispute that may arise as a result of exploitation of minerals which may be found in the proximity of any unsurveyed portion of the boundary. They will permit the ready establishment of a well marked conventional boundary without the rather cumbersome and lengthy procedures that would otherwise result each time a portion of the sinuous boundary had to be conventionalized.

With these few remarks I complete my presentation on this bill. I am sure several members on the opposition side of the House will want to speak to it. When the bill goes to committee we will be able to go into the full detail of all its ramifications.

Mr. Joe Clark (Rocky Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I must say at the outset we very much regret that what appeared to be an agreement to expedite the business of this House has now been broken by the commencement of debate by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Foster).

Some hon. Members: Shame.