

provincial jurisdiction, the minister could provide the same kind of leadership which was provided by the Atlantic Development Board when it made substantial capital grants toward power development, not only for the Baie d'Espoir power which developed as a result of a \$25 million grant, but also for the power which was developed with federal government help on the upper Saint John river. That is the kind of help we want. That is the leadership we want.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic members in the House support this motion because it seeks to draw attention to the appallingly high costs of electric power in the Atlantic provinces and the hardship which follows therefrom, and seeks to censure the government because it has not yet presented any constructive policies to meet that situation, and also because we think that this is a good opportunity to discuss some of the things which might be done to improve the lot of the people in the Atlantic provinces. There can be no doubt about the fact that hardship is being suffered in the Atlantic provinces because of high electrical rates. I keep getting letters from people in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia—

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): And Manitoba.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): — enclosing their power bills, and how they are able to pay them is beyond me. The hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay) says "and Manitoba". I should point out that his own Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) said in the House yesterday that Manitoba has the lowest power rates in Canada. The hon. member ought to remember that.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): It has still doubled up, just the same.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): If the hon. member wants to make a speech I will let him do so, but not on my time.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I can do that, too.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The hon. member ought to do it. He has a big voice. I should like to hear if he has anything to say.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): I have a lot to say.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Not only have the high electrical rates caused hardship to individuals in the Atlantic provinces, but as the hon. member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Hogan) and the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield) pointed out this afternoon, they can have disastrous results for the economy of the Atlantic provinces. In order to be competitive today any industry must be able to get power at reasonably low cost, and I must say that I was disappointed to see the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) treat this matter in what I thought was a somewhat callous and offhand manner. He discussed the problem. He found fault with what everyone else had to say. He blamed almost everyone he could think of because of the plight of the Atlantic provinces, but he did not once come

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up with a concrete commitment as to what the federal government is prepared to do about this situation.

• (2030)

If I have any criticism of the motion presented by the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) it is, first, that it did not give the reasons why the Atlantic provinces are in this predicament and, second, it did not make any concrete proposals on what might be done. Let me deal with those two items briefly.

Why are the Atlantic provinces in the position where their energy costs are higher than any place else in Canada? As a matter of fact their industrial power costs are 100 per cent higher, and in comparison to some provinces they are 150 per cent higher. The dream of Cape Breton for years, for instance, has been for a steel industry but there cannot be an economically viable steel industry there unless these power rates are substantially reduced.

We are in this situation, Mr. Speaker, because there has not been a coherent energy policy in Canada. I was interested to notice in this morning's paper that the Liberal leader in the province of Ontario said that yesterday in the Ontario legislature.

Mr. Woolliams: He has to say something.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The federal government has never come up with an over-all, integrated energy policy. We did have an oil policy which the administration of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) introduced in 1961 following the report of the Borden commission. That oil policy was a disaster. It was based on the assumption that we had unlimited supplies of oil and gas and could afford to sell 60 per cent of our production to the United States, without any thought that we had less resources than the United States and that our resources were dwindling very rapidly. That was carried on by the successor government of Mr. Pearson, and under the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) the government has constantly refused to face up to the realities of the energy situation in Canada.

In 1969 the report of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources claimed that by 1990 we would not only be able to meet our own oil needs but also to export four million barrels of oil per day. By 1973 they have modified that somewhat and said we would be self-sufficient by 1985. Last week the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources brought in his so-called self-reliance program, in which he said that by 1985 we will be importing one third of our oil requirements. That statement is not quite accurate, Mr. Speaker. If you look at the figures in the report it is much higher than one third. I suggest that by 1985 we will probably be importing over 50 per cent of our oil requirements and will probably be paying in the neighbourhood of \$15 per barrel for it. That is a bill of \$4½ or more, that the Canadian people will have to pay to import oil.

There has been no long term planning with respect to energy. I attended a federal-provincial conference 20 years ago at which we urged the federal government of that day to assist the provinces and to give leadership in establishing a national power grid. Because of the various time zones in Canada it would have been possible, by a national power grid, to have reduced the amount of installation for