

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I would like to clarify the matter. We have the right to call the items of business that come before the house. I said we would be agreeable to proceeding only with second reading of this bill tonight, and then I made a qualification that there was another item, No. 96, a third reading, that we wanted to call. I believe no one wishes to speak on it.

Mr. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): After this merry-go-round I have almost forgotten what I wanted to say. However, some of the points I was going to raise are now qualified by the agreement which has been reached not to proceed with all stages tonight. I agree with the Minister of Industry (Mr. Drury) that this is an important piece of legislation. It is obvious that his colleague, the house leader, had not appreciated it was as important as the minister and many of the rest of us consider it.

One can readily agree with the basic principle of the bill, the furtherance of scientific research and development in the industrial field, and to that extent at least I am prepared to support its passage on second reading. On the other hand there are what I would call ancillary principles in the bill which raise serious questions in the minds of some of us.

One of the principles in the bill is that it is to be administered directly by the minister and that the determination of who is to get grants and for what purposes grants are to be made rest in the minister's hands. There is a provision that he can seek advice from such bodies as the National Research Council, but I think it is legitimate to question whether this is the soundest approach that could be taken and whether such matters should rest entirely in the hands of a minister or a department of government. It is possible that they could be better determined by some kind of scientific board. Not long ago we set up a science council for Canada. I do not suggest that it could function more effectively than the minister in this connection, but from the opportunity I have had to study the bill I question that the matter should rest entirely with the minister's department.

With respect to a bill of this kind, which will have such far-reaching and permanent effects on the direction in which scientific research is to go in Canada and its relationship to the industrial development of our country, there should be an opportunity for examination in depth before it is enacted as a statute. Though I and my colleagues are prepared to give at least conditional approval to second reading tonight, in our view this kind

Man.-Northwest Territories Boundary Act of bill could be better handled not by desultory discussion in committee of the whole house but by referring it to a standing or special committee where its implications, both financial and scientific, could be considered in depth and where representatives of industry and science could be called to explore the full implications of the bill.

As the hon. member for Edmonton West said, it is unfortunate that we are faced with the suggestion that if the bill is not passed by the end of the year there may be some hiatus in the research programs undertaken by certain firms. But rather than rush an important measure like this through the house, I think it would be better to act quickly to provide for an extension of the provisions of section 72A of the Income Tax Act, so that the present program could continue until this bill, or one which would result from detailed consideration of it, could be enacted.

This bill has appeared but recently on the order paper, with no advance warning until today that it was going to be called before the recess. Thus my understanding of it in some respects is still rather fragmentary. I am sure this is the case with many hon. members. Therefore I would ask the minister to give serious consideration to requesting his colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp), to bring forward a temporary solution to meet the particular problem and give the house an opportunity to make a proper examination of what I think basically is a sound idea.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, it was my intention to speak on second reading but since we have agreed to give approval to the principle of the bill, and due to the lateness of the hour, I reserve the right to speak in general discussion when we reach committee stage of the bill.

Motion agreed to and bill read the second time.

• (12:50 a.m.)

MANITOBA-NORTHWEST TERRITORIES BOUNDARY ACT

DECLARATION OF BOUNDARY LINE SURVEYED AND MARKED

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved the third reading of Bill No. S-47, respecting the boundary between the province of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.