

island and is now at the mercy of oil-fired, steam-generated electricity which is very expensive. This project would save importing oil to Newfoundland to be converted to power. It is in the national interest as well as in the provincial interest.

There would be a surplus of power from that development which Newfoundland could not use for ten or fifteen years, which potentially could be sold to Quebec or some other purchaser if Quebec would allow it to be transmitted across the province to customers in the maritimes. The federal government's offer of assistance was much too small. They offered to lend one half of the cost of the transmission line to the project and would allow interest to be capitalized during construction and some other things that would total \$343 million out of this \$2.3 billion project.

In addition to the paucity of assistance offered by the federal government, the government of Quebec would not agree to buy the surplus power from Newfoundland at a reasonable price, nor allow Newfoundland to transmit it across their territory to other customers. They said, "Sell to us at the price we say, or do not sell at all." And this great Canadian government did nothing about it. They did not offer to use their powers under the BNA Act, section 92(10), to declare a transmission line across Quebec to be a work for the general advantage of Canada. If they had, Quebec could no longer blackmail Newfoundland and prevent the Gull Island project. But the government said that they would not interfere.

But now, with an election coming, on February 15, during a television program, they pretended the Gull Island program is now going ahead. When we look beneath the surface we find nothing but weasel words about further studies, that the federal government is taking equity in a company, and so on. This was the most dishonest television program ever seen in the history of television. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources should have been given an enema award instead of an Emmy award.

● (2217)

On February 20 the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson), in an interview he gave to the *Evening Telegram*, stated it was a question of how much money can be generated out of the power in Labrador in order to develop power on the island in a less expensive way if possible. In other words, what the minister is suggesting is perhaps they will not divert to Newfoundland any hydro energy generated in Labrador. We will not do that if Labrador power can be sold outside Labrador, and then use the profits to subsidize power on the island of Newfoundland. That is the suggestion made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

He went on to say that there is now a re-examination under way of whether or not there has to be a tunnel at all to carry the power from Labrador under the Strait of Belle Isle to Newfoundland. He went on to say he does not think financing will be a problem. Once it is determined where the markets are, where the power is going, "then the financing will flow", he said. What is going to flow from now until the election is

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over is the Secretary of State for External Affairs: he will flow. The financing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order. I regret to inform the hon. member that his allotted time has expired.

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, it is always a treat for us on this side to listen to the empty polemics of the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie). He has developed a well earned reputation as perhaps one of the noisiest, one of the most boisterous and at times one of the more innovative speakers in this House. He is not a man who has developed a reputation for accuracy, but that is not something that disturbs him. He is interested in projecting a sense of aggressiveness. Indeed, whenever it comes to the question of advancing energy projects, we on this side of the House think that he is far more interested in projecting his own advance, not advancing energy projects in his own province. That has been clear from the beginning.

I remember when he was a minister in the government of Newfoundland, a government which he is now criticizing and which he left because he felt he could advance himself more propitiously in the federal House. I remember that he and his government at that time could not make up their minds whether they wanted to go ahead with the Gull Island project. They had not been successful in getting the province of Quebec to agree to terms they had put forward. When we talked to them about the Gull Island project, an important national asset which we wanted to see advanced, they said "We are not quite ready because we cannot make up our minds whether to go ahead with this now or wait until there has been a settlement in the courts with Quebec".

It is interesting that the premier of Newfoundland has now reached agreement with us on the establishment of a corporation. Now that the premier has lost the counsel, advice and temerity, but not the noise, of the hon. member, he has said yes, he would like to form a corporation with us; he would like the federal government as equity partners. The federal government has said it would like to go ahead on that basis and that a corporation would be the logical first step in moving this massive project forward. The federal government has said that the corporation should be the agent for marketing that power, for assessing the financing of that project and working out plans for constructing and managing it. The hon. member is mostly noise, but those of us on this side of the House have become used to it.

● (2222)

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE—CANADIAN RAILROAD WORKERS EMPLOYED BY UNITED STATES RAILROADS—ENTITLEMENT TO BENEFITS

Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, on February 13 I asked a question of the minister responsible for unemployment insurance regarding the circumstances of Canadian railroad workers employed by United States railroads who work in Canada. The minister at that time was