

*Atlantic Provinces Power Development*

I can tell hon. members that that kind of thing did not happen under the previous administration.

**Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle):** It did not happen under this one, either.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The hon. member for St. John's West put it on record himself. He said a telegram purporting to have been a copy came from the premier of Newfoundland. He would certainly not have said "purported" if he had got it from the Prime Minister. I find it very hard to understand why a matter of this importance involving this great national policy which occupied four paragraphs in Her Majesty's gracious speech should have been considered of so little moment that the cabinet did not have time to consider it and that the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Mr. Hamilton) should not, apparently, have given it any serious consideration, either.

**Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle):** Mr. Speaker, on a question of privilege. I told the hon. member that no such thing happened; in effect, that the matter was considered. Any statement to the contrary is not the truth.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I do not think that that is a question of privilege, but I do not want to quarrel with the minister. If the government did consider it, that makes the position much worse, because one could perhaps forgive the minister, over Christmas, with his many preoccupations—and I know he is working hard; we all recognize the fact that he is new in parliament as well as new in the government; and all of us are very anxious to give the greatest possible consideration to the minister because, as I stated the other day, and I say it again now, the minister is conscientiously trying to do a good job—if he perhaps failed to give this matter his immediate attention.

But I think the circumstances which I have just related make it clearer than ever that I was quite right the other day, when, speaking on the resolution, I said it was very apparent that the real disability under which the minister was suffering was that the government had no policy at all; it did not know where it was going, what it was doing or what principles underlay its policies. Therefore, the minister did not have any information with which to satisfy our curiosity.

The minister said something and the hon. member for St. John's West also said something which was really very extraordinary indeed. It was that they could not change this legislation—this very complicated legislation—because it was already planned and based on careful discussion with the premiers

of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. I really do not think it is worthy of the minister to seek to insult the intelligence of the house in this way. There is nothing complicated about this bill; this is the simplest possible bill. The omission of three words would accomplish all that the premier of Newfoundland sought. It would commit the government to no specific project, but it would make it possible for the government to do in Newfoundland what it professes to want to do, that is, to help the Atlantic provinces to have cheaper power.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Is the hon. member speaking to the House of Commons or to the gallery?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The hon. gentleman is speaking on behalf of his constituents, something I have yet to hear the hon. member for Huron do in all the years he has been in this house.

**Mr. Cardiff:** You have not been here very long yet.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Speaker, it is a good thing there are some people on this side of the house concentrating on Newfoundland, because it is perfectly obvious that no one on the other side of the house cares at all about Newfoundland.

**Mr. MacInnis:** It is obvious they were never concentrated upon.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The hon. member for Cape Breton South who apparently believes in action rather than words, though he expends a great many words in the house, perhaps will make his own speech when I have finished mine.

**Mr. MacInnis:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. It seems that in the last few days there have been several challenges flung in this house and all that has to be done is to check the pages of *Hansard* to ascertain from what side of the house these challenges have originated.

**Mr. Speaker:** What is the hon. member's question of privilege?

**Mr. Argue:** He is taking up the challenge.

**Mr. Gour:** It is a guilty conscience, that is all.

**Mr. MacInnis:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate (Mr. Pickersgill) seems to insinuate that I follow a line of words rather than a line of action.

**Mr. Gauthier (Portneuf):** That is your privilege.

**Mr. Gour:** That is not a question of privilege, it is a speech.