

Atlantic Provinces Power Development

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, I certainly would not want to suggest to the government that there be any breaking of faith but I fail to see how it is breaking faith with two of the premiers of Atlantic provinces if the bill is amended in such a way that it does not detract by one iota from what was promised them but merely extends something of equivalent value at least to one other of the four Atlantic provinces. I do not suggest that anything be taken away from what has been promised Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. I do not suggest any detraction from the tribute the minister has paid to the premiers of those two provinces in connection with what they have done.

But I remind the minister that the title of the bill is not the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick power development act or the Conservative Atlantic provinces power development act; it is the Atlantic Provinces Power Development Act and there are four Atlantic provinces. I suggest that if this is going to be a bill directed in its appeal to the pride of the people of the Atlantic provinces, and my background is such that I am fully aware of what that means, this amendment might well be made so that something will be offered to Newfoundland in terms of Newfoundland's situation, and possibly to Prince Edward Island, which is equivalent in value to what is being offered to the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. I am sorry that the minister finds it so impossible to accede to this suggestion. I hope he does not find himself in the difficult position to which I referred a moment ago.

In fact, at this juncture I feel that perhaps I might ask the minister or the Minister of Finance—they seem to be the only two ministers present—no, the Minister without Portfolio from Newfoundland is also present—whether the government regards it as a government defeat that its course of action with regard to the progress of the Beechwood bill has been upset or delayed by a vote of the opposition over in the other place? The Minister of Finance looks at me with a quizzical eye. Does he realize that the suggestion that there be haste in connection with the bill in the other place has been set aside and that a motion to refer it to a committee was passed by the Liberal opposition against the wish of the government leader in the Senate? Is that a defeat of the government?

Mr. Fleming: I should think that it was a procedural question in the other place, where the confidence in the government is not directly in issue. I am to appear before the committee of the other place tomorrow morning at the committee stage of the bill.

[Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle).]

Mr. Thompson (Edmonton-Sirathcona): I should like to say a few words suggesting that the words "by steam-driven generators" be removed for another reason in addition to those already submitted by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the members from Newfoundland. It would appear to me that the removal of these words would enable the development of electrical energy by the most efficient type of unit to take place in the maritimes at any time. If these words are left in, it would seem to me that there might be a danger of this type of development taking place when, in actual fact, the development of a hydro unit would have been cheaper because the payment of coal subventions would be unnecessary. Would the minister state whether or not it would be possible for such a development to take place, which would require government assistance in the form of coal subventions, when such assistance would not have been required if a hydro development had been undertaken? This would be particularly true in Newfoundland.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): I think I have made it clear once or twice before, but in so far as hydro plants in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are concerned—I am speaking of one in particular—it was at the insistence of the premiers of these provinces that these hydro projects were kept out of this bill. This matter was discussed between the two premiers and myself. Possibly I would have advanced the same argument as my hon. friend had it not been for the insistence of the two premiers.

As I said, the philosophy of this party is that we are trying to work in co-operation with the provinces. As long as federal interests and the federal purse are protected, then if the provinces want to do it this way, we will go along with them. That is what we have done.

Mr. Hansell: Mr. Chairman, clause 2 is the interpretation clause and outlines the definitions of the various terms that are used. This clause contains a definition of the word "coal". I am proposing to the minister that perhaps there should be a change in that connection because there could be some discrimination against other provinces in respect to the production of coal. Even although the minister will not make this bill all-embracing so that other provinces could come under it if they wished, I believe he could go so far as to have a provision written into the bill that would permit the coal mining areas in the rest of Canada to supply coal to the maritime provinces. I