

Atlantic Provinces Power Development

thermal units, hydraulic units or other modern developments in the atomic and nuclear field that may yet come. We feel that this should be done with a view not just to assisting one part of the country but with a view to making possible the advantages of electric power in Canada as a whole.

As I have said, Mr. Speaker, we shall support this measure. It will do something for the Atlantic provinces and it has our vote. But we feel it is only a halting step in the direction of a tremendous program of power development which is possible, which we advocate, and which we hope we shall yet see in this great country of ours.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Queens): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words on this very important bill. One characteristic of Prince Edward Islanders is a certain laconic brevity. I assure you that I will give an example of that characteristic tonight.

We welcome the new recognition that has come to the maritimes with this new government. One of the senior members of this house the other day remarked to me that for years he hardly ever heard of the maritimes but that now he hears of the maritimes every day. To paraphrase a certain expression that has become very popular here as it has in another country, may I say that what is good for the maritimes is good for the country. I therefore think that this is altogether a very healthy development. Indeed, so healthy has this development become that even certain members across the way have shown a tender solicitude for the condition and the lot of the maritimes and this they express every day. That is the kind of thing that we welcome. It was not always so obvious in years past, but it is all to the good at the present time.

Speaking of a national policy I think the minister responsible for this bill and the government of which he forms a part are now displaying their awareness and their vision of a truly national policy. In this country for so long one of the great economic drawbacks was the fact that the concentration of industry and commerce and, indeed of population, was in the centre of the country. Then during the years we were very happy to see the healthy economic development in other parts of the country, including the discovery of oil in Alberta, the rich resources in British Columbia, the steps towards diversification of the economy of Manitoba and even, despite certain political handicaps, the developments in Saskatchewan. All of these things are welcome. They are bringing about some equalization across the country so far as economic and commercial wealth is concerned. But in this picture

throughout the years the maritimes has been the area which has lagged farthest behind in general economic welfare. Hence if the new government is concentrating on the amelioration of conditions in the maritimes it is showing, in my opinion, an awareness of the national needs of this country.

We in Prince Edward Island are much interested in this measure. We learned this afternoon that Newfoundland is interested, although they are not altogether in agreement as to what it means to them. However, we in Prince Edward Island are without those areas of disagreement. The premier of our province has communicated with the Prime Minister of Canada and he has said that he believes this offer could be extended to Prince Edward Island. He has stressed some of the needs of our province. I may say that the premier of my province has made other observations recently as quoted in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald*. With those observations I agree as wholeheartedly as I do with the arguments set forth in this letter to this government.

He recently said that the late government did not give the maritimes half a deal. I think that Premier Matheson is quite correct. In our little province our need is great. Our fair province is blessed in many ways but it has not flourished as has the rest of the country in these years of development in Canada. We have actually lost population. In the year 1891 our population was 109,000; then it fell to 88,000 and gradually, and only slowly, has there been a partial recovery and even yet our population has not climbed back to the original figure. The young people continue to leave the province of Prince Edward Island. At one time they went to New England and they provided the intellectual leaven and the commercial backbone of those states. Now they go to Toronto and Montreal. While we think that is a fine development for those two great cities, we do not think it is a very good thing for Prince Edward Island.

More and cheaper power as envisaged in this bill would help our province in many ways. I shall cite only a few. It might help and indeed it could help our small industries. We have a few such as our canneries, fertilizer plants, packing plants, cold storage plants and the rest. Such small industries as we have would be greatly benefited by the development of more and cheaper power. The lot of our farmers would certainly be improved by making more and cheaper electrical power available for them in their daily work. It might help and indeed I think it would help somewhat in arresting something that disturbs us greatly in Prince Edward