

Atlantic Provinces Power Development

he made the point that the aim of this government was simply to assist provincial governments in those projects. I thought he made it clear that it was the provincial governments or their agencies that would build the plants with financial assistance from the federal government. I note, however, that this subclause suggests that the power projects will be constructed by Canada; in other words, constructed by the federal government and then transferred to the provinces. Did I misunderstand the minister when he spoke earlier? What is the situation? I will put my question in another form. Which agency does the actual constructing of the plants in question?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Mr. Chairman, there will be co-operative construction of those plants and transmission lines. The procedure will be that the province in question and the government of Canada, represented by the northern Canada power commission, will agree on the design and then let the proposition out to tender and will agree on a consulting firm which represents both governments to supervise the building of this plant. Therefore, technically, I suppose, the plant is built by the government of Canada; but we are working in close co-operation with the government or the power commission of the province in question. Therefore, it is a co-operative building. Because we put up the money to pay the contractors it is considered that we, the federal government, are doing the building. When it is completed to the satisfaction of both we turn it over and they own it and operate it.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that the minister will have to square what he has now said with what he said earlier in the debate. I appreciate his attempt to make it clear that this is a co-operative arrangement and I have no doubt that it will be, but the legislation before us does not provide for the construction to be done on a co-operative basis; it provides for the construction to be done by the federal government. We suggested earlier that the other statute might have been used so that the northern Canada power commission might construct power plants in various parts of Canada and the minister complained that we were invading the provincial field. I suggest that the wording of this subclause envisages the very thing the minister did not like.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): I do not think there is any misunderstanding between the provinces and ourselves on this point. Technically we are building them but in practice, since the power commission in each of these

provinces is going to operate these installations, it is to their interest to make sure that the plant is built well and that it suits their plans for future operation. We have no quarrel with them on that point at all. Technically we are building them ourselves but actually in practice we are building them in co-operation. I do not recall any statement I made earlier in the debate that would suggest anything other than what I have just said.

Mr. Lesage: I draw the attention of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre to clause 3, subclause 2(b) and particularly to line 15 where we find the words "or provisions for advances by Canada to the province". That part of the clause was explained to me this afternoon by the minister, and I am sure the hon. member will realize that the construction or installation of the plants and transmission lines will not necessarily be made by Canada.

Mr. Hahn: Mr. Chairman, I should like to refer specially to the word "Atlantic" in clause 3, subclause 1. Clause 2(d) defines "power project" in this way:

"Power project" means . . . facilities for the control and transmission of electric energy, the site of any such facilities, and land, water, rights to use water, buildings, works, machinery, installations, materials, transmission lines, furnishings, equipment, construction plant, stores, and supplies acquired, constructed or used or adapted for or in connection with any such facilities.

I am wondering now whether it is the purpose of the bill to restrict the application to the Atlantic provinces in order to stop the province of British Columbia from taking advantage of this legislation in the development of the Columbia river project.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): At the very outset it would be impossible for the province of British Columbia to make use of the legislation in any case; (a) because it is limited to the four provinces and (b) because it concerns subventions on coal for thermal projects in those provinces. I fail to see the implication of the hon. member's remarks. I was trying to catch up on the hon. member's reading of the section and did not quite follow what the hon. member said.

Mr. Hahn: My thought is that the definition of power project may well include any development on a river because it includes transmission lines and so on which might well be those parts of a hydro development in which the government could assist the province of British Columbia in order to make it possible to obtain cheap power for the lower mainland of British Columbia. Clause 2, subclause (d), refers specifically to facilities for the control and transmission of electric