

*Atlantic Provinces Power Development*

I was interested, and I am grateful to the minister for it, in the answer he gave me this afternoon that if there is a request from the province of Newfoundland couched in terms that appeal to the government as a proper request for assistance for a hydro-electric project, sympathetic consideration will be given thereto. When I asked the minister how the government would go about that if the bill is passed in its present form, he suggested that if it were necessary another bill would be introduced. I say to the minister that there are rumours and suggestions being made around the halls of this building—we get more information by way of rumour sometimes than we do by way of announcements that are made in due course—that one of the reasons the government has been so anxious to get this legislation, like the Beechwood bill and this one, through was its desire to be sure it has this legislation on the statute books in advance of any possible dissolution if that should come unexpectedly. I am not asking at this moment as to the date of the election. If I wanted to ask that I would do so point blank.

**Mr. Fraser:** You would get a blank answer.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** The hon. member for Peterborough says that I would get a blank answer. Maybe we will have to answer the question ourselves one of these days. My question to the minister is this. Suppose it should happen that this parliament came to an end and we were in the midst of a general election during which time the government was anxious to meet a request such as is expected from Newfoundland; does the minister not realize that without legislation on the statute books the government would not be able to meet that request and the matter would have to wait until a new parliament reassembles under whatever government might be in power?

I ask the minister to consider how easy it is to meet that problem now simply by deleting the words "by steam-driven generators" from line 16 of this clause. He will probably point out to me that there is at least one other place in the bill where the same words would have to be deleted but I would say to him that so far as the appearance of those words in line 25 on page 2 is concerned they should stay there even under the terms that we are suggesting because in line 25 on page 2 they relate to possible subventions in respect of eastern coal used in the operation of certain facilities.

As I say, there might be one or two consequential amendments that might have to be made but I ask the minister if he will not consider once again, for the sake of the position in Newfoundland and the sake of the

government in case it wants to meet such a request in a situation that might develop, the desirability of deleting the words "by steam-driven generators"?

**Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle):** Mr. Chairman, I think my answer was made this afternoon in concluding the debate on second reading when I said that if we made such an amendment at this stage it would be breaking faith with the two premiers. I suggested this afternoon that there were several reasons why they wanted the bill this way. One was the matter of the separation of hydro and thermal for their own particular reasons but mainly coming down to the one aspect. I said, subject to correction by the Minister of Veterans Affairs, that it struck me that the question of power in the maritimes was largely coloured by local pride. I said that it was a great step forward to get Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to co-operate to the extent that they did. It speaks well of the leadership of the two men who guided the negotiations for their provinces.

With regard to the question of mixing hydro and thermal power, they both agreed and advocated strongly that the two should not be put together, mainly on the ground that in New Brunswick the Beechwood project was a matter of provincial pride. All the talk of their government was based on their faith that they could complete that project themselves. As I said this afternoon, they asked for the minimum of help, just eight years to cover the period of floating their own bonds. I think it is to their credit that they want to be as independent as possible from federal help or help from any other source. To make such an amendment in the bill would break the pledge that we made in discussing the general points of agreement.

There is one more thing that I think should be mentioned with regard to the adding of the provinces of Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. When the suggestion was first made to them it had not entered their minds seriously up to that time, and I think it speaks well of the broader outlook that is developing in the minds of the leading statesmen of the Atlantic provinces that they are beginning to see their area in terms of a region which has to work together to help itself by its own efforts.

I would feel that I would have to turn down the suggestion advanced by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. No matter how kindly his thoughts are as to the difficulties of the government and the difficulties that may lie ahead, I think there is a question of keeping faith and the pledge we have made has to be honoured.