

Atlantic Provinces Power Development

for these facilities to the four Atlantic provinces with no strings attached and, furthermore, that this government has two other points of substance which the former government would not touch, namely Beechwood and a coal subvention. One point only of the former government's program bears some similarity with one of the three points of this government's announced program, and, even on this one point there are marked differences.

But for the purposes of this part of the discussion let us agree that there are points of resemblance in one of the points of the two programs. Let us assume that the inspiration for this program can be found in Professor Christie's report of 1954 to the coal board. I think my hon. friends opposite would also agree that late in 1955 the premier of New Brunswick and his economic adviser approached the then government and asked for financial aid for their electrical energy program for the next ten years. And I think that they will agree that on January 27, 1956, Premier Flemming presented a formal brief for aid to either all the hydro development or for the thermal and hydro developments in that province.

My only conclusion as I read the record, Mr. Speaker, is that eighteen months elapsed before the former government would give a reply to New Brunswick's pleas for aid, and the reply that was given was given on the very eve of an election.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am rising on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Your Honour will recall that earlier this afternoon I was restricted in my argument on the Beechwood project. It seems to me that the minister is now discussing the Beechwood project which has been disposed of by the house.

Mr. Speaker: I take it the point was correct, and would apply if the minister were going to discuss this matter at any length. I take it he will not, and that he will confine his remarks to the bill.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): I have glanced down through my notes, Mr. Speaker, and I do use the word "Beechwood" once more.

Mr. Lesage: Better leave it out.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): I was saying that as we read the record, 18 months elapsed before the former government would give a reply to New Brunswick's pleas for aid, and the reply that was given was given on the very eve of the election. In contrast, what is the record of the present administration? Long before the election, members on this side stated in and out of season that the then government should assist the Beechwood project of New Brunswick.

Mr. Pickersgill: There it is again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member is quite correct in raising the point of order. We have just passed the Beechwood bill and it is not in order to debate it again. I understood that the minister was relating this bill to the general policy and I had not thought of raising the point myself.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): I wonder if I may speak to the point of order. When we were dealing with the Beechwood project we were, I submit, dealing with a particular thing, but now, I think, we are dealing with something more general. The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate (Mr. Pickersgill) would have been more in order if he had made reference to Beechwood now than he was in making reference to other projects when he was speaking on the Beechwood project.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, if the government wishes to have an understanding to that effect it would be perfectly agreeable on our side. If we could speak about the national policy we would be happy to do so and I would withdraw any objections to the minister's reference to Beechwood.

Mr. Speaker: All I would ask is that the house confine itself to a discussion of the bill before it.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude these remarks on second reading by pointing out that we offered coal subventions as a means of lowering Atlantic power costs. We suggested and pleaded for financial aid to the Atlantic provinces in the lowering of power costs. Here we are, Mr. Speaker, scarcely six months after having been elected—

Mr. Pickersgill: Seven months.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): —and already this government has outlined its policy for aid to the Atlantic provinces for power, and on December 21, 1957, a money resolution was introduced as a preliminary to this bill. This record of action, I suggest, speaks for itself.

Mr. Lesage: Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the minister. Have any agreements been signed as yet under this proposed legislation?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): The answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, is no.

Mr. Lesage: I would also point out what has been mentioned by the hon. member for