

Atlantic Provinces Power Development

What we want is not transmission lines. We want power. As the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate pointed out, this is not an area into which private enterprise can go because it is not an economic field. It is one that involves huge costs, as the minister himself pointed out, because the transmission lines are perhaps more costly items than the plants. What we want, as the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate pointed out, is to utilize our small power resources and hook them up to industrialize small sections of Newfoundland, particularly those sections which have no power facilities whatever. This can be done, and if the government does not want to interfere with private enterprise and discriminate between one processor in Newfoundland and another processor on the mainland, then something like this will have to be done.

Mr. R. J. McCleave (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, I should like to speak for a few minutes, if I may, in support of the principle of this measure which we are considering, found in Bill No. 244 and also at pages 37 to 39 of the red handbook with which 1,500 visitors to Ottawa have been supplied so that they may find how to write a proper political program. During the debate there has been a mention of power costs, but I do not believe anyone has dealt with another point which I should like to consider very briefly, and that is the help this measure will provide to the coal mining communities, perhaps not to extend their markets but to at least hold the markets they now have.

In the riding of Halifax, on the eastern side of Halifax harbour, there is located a steam electric generating plant of the Nova Scotia Light and Power Company. It is one of the most modern plants in the world. Last year this plant used 110,857 tons of Nova Scotia slack coal, at a price somewhere around \$12.50 per ton, without taking the freight rates into account. This meant an expenditure of about \$1½ million for Cape Breton coal. It will perhaps come as a surprise to hon. members to know that Nova Scotia coal has been fighting a losing battle for some time, and falling back upon its centre of production. Actually, coal from the United States has been able to encroach farther and farther into the markets that were traditional for the Nova Scotia coal mines.

A rather interesting facet of this bill we are considering today is the fact that slack coal from the United States had become competitive in price with Nova Scotia coal right in the capital of Nova Scotia, Halifax. I do not have the exact figures to show the cost

of slack coal from the United States, but I imagine an analogy can be drawn from the fact that ordinary coal for home furnaces from the United States was about \$2.38 more per ton than domestic coal produced in the Sydney area. Another factor to be taken into consideration is the higher b.t.u. content of the United States coal.

I think perhaps the house can see the position. If this bill was not brought into effect at this time or if any agreement which this bill will bring into being did not come into effect very shortly, we may be faced with the possibility that United States coal will drive out Sydney coal from the Halifax market. With the subventions that will be brought into effect by this bill that, of course, is something that will not happen. I think that is an extremely important consideration.

I note that the hon. member for Macleod (Mr. Hansell) laid some stress upon the fact that other coal should be allowed into the thermal plants in the maritimes. With all the subventions in the world I do not think you would be able to bring Alberta coal into a Nova Scotia or New Brunswick thermal power plant except at prohibitive cost to the treasury. But with the subventions that we are in effect approving when we approve this bill, we shall at least be able to hold our own in Nova Scotia, using Nova Scotia coal in our electric generating plants.

Mr. L. T. Stick (Trinity-Conception): Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be brief because I should like to show the minister that I do not want to tie up this legislation. During the debate at the resolution stage of this measure we pointed out to the minister that we in Newfoundland wished to participate fully in the intent of the bill and the resolution. At that time I pointed out to the minister that we would not move an amendment but we asked the government to take into consideration adding just two words to the resolution so that we could participate fully in the measures designed in this bill to help the Atlantic provinces. I once more appeal to the minister and to the government that, when the bill is being considered clause by clause, the minister reconsider the situation and accede to the request from the province of Newfoundland that we be permitted to participate fully in the measures designed in the bill by adding the words "hydroelectric energy".

We have had this afternoon from the minister assurances that if the government of Newfoundland approaches the federal government for aid in building hydroelectric plants such requests will be considered on their merits. We have had those assurances previously, Mr. Speaker. May I point out to the