

Atlantic Provinces Power Development

the form of minerals, oil and other natural products have gone to the other provinces of Canada but nothing by way of compensation to the people of the maritime provinces.

Mind you in the days of confederation there were only four provinces, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. This public domain belonged to Canada. I have gone back many years to see what the men representing the maritime provinces in the House of Commons had to say in those days. They pointed out that we were entitled to some compensation in view of the lands which were given to the other provinces but not one dollar of compensation has ever been given.

I do not wish to enlarge on this matter any further. In my mind the bill before us makes up in large measure for the neglect these provinces have suffered in the past. I want to thank hon. members for their support of this bill and at the same time I thank them for passing the Beechwood bill. I advocated that project time and time again and no one is more pleased than I am that measure was passed. I want to thank them also for what I know they intend to do, namely to pass the bill before us this afternoon.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: I have to inform the house that if the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, I think the house will realize after the words of the veteran minister of the Department of Veterans Affairs how keenly—

Mr. Lesage: He is not a veteran minister. He is the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): I will repeat myself. After hearing the words of the veteran minister who presides over the Department of Veteran Affairs, I think we can understand the feeling of the people of the Atlantic provinces who comprise one of the regions of Canada that have not received just treatment in the full measure of the word from the confederation under which we have lived since 1867. In my negotiations with the premiers of the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia I felt the seriousness underlying their remarks and their expressions of earnest desire for various things, this seriousness went far beyond what is ordinary when ministers are representing the Queen in various capacities. When I spoke on the resolution stage I congratulated the two premiers because I was very proud indeed that as a new member of parliament

and new minister it should fall to my lot to consummate something which had been in the minds of these people for several years.

I think the words of the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Brooks) this afternoon have made it very clear that we had no ulterior motive in limiting the bill to any section of the country. As a matter of fact, I thought it would draw general praise when we went beyond the two provinces which are primarily concerned with the terms of the bill and included two other provinces. In my remarks on the resolution I said very frankly that I did not know nor did my department have any express knowledge of what particular projects might be of interest to the province of Newfoundland beyond the general logical conclusion that there might be a place for transmission lines between their various power projects.

I mentioned on the resolution stage that there were several hydro propositions in the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick which might in the future come under the terms of the bill as far as plants and transmission lines were concerned but that if they wanted assistance from the government the matter would have to be brought before the federal government and dealt with on the basis of need as generally understood and under those principles underlying the two bills that have been presented to the house. I am not going to say any more than that at this time.

I should now like to say a word or two in answer to certain questions asked by the hon. member for Montmagny-L'Islet (Mr. Lesage) which I think should be answered on second reading in order to make clear before the motion is put what does happen under the bill. One question asked was, what does the northern Canada power commission do under the agreement? I think that can be answered in two ways. First, it will advise the minister on the merits of the particular projects. Second, it will help to administer the program in co-operation with the provinces having regard to design, construction and the examination of expenditures that have been ratified by the minister and the governor in council as they occur.

Mr. Lesage: Would the minister permit a question so that we can clear up that matter now? Under certain circumstances will the northern Canada power commission do the actual building or erection of plants and transmission lines, awarding of contracts, et cetera?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): I think I can best describe their function in this way. Under the terms of these agreements we are