

which they already owned? Here is a beautiful example of the left hand not knowing what the right hand does.

However, let us come down to the part that I mentioned when I started my remarks. All other provinces of Canada have ownership of their resources without any equivocation. I am talking about the ownership of the resources; I am not talking about what the federal government owns in the North-west Territories or the Yukon.

I have already said that section 7 of the BNA Act gives Nova Scotia and New Brunswick the same rights they had at the time of confederation. As I have already said, other provinces have had fundamental ownership since confederation. North Ontario is an example. The mining area of Sudbury has been added to Ontario. It has helped Ontario, and it has helped Canada. I have already mentioned James Bay, Alberta and Saskatchewan. However, the tar sands are in Alberta. My friend talked earlier about the bill here before the House in terms of the hydro line and obtaining rights to convey hydro across the territory of Quebec in the same manner as gas and oil were conveyed across other provinces. The premier of Quebec has said that this right of way is a violation of the sovereignty of Quebec. I am not going to debate it. I know that my friends in Newfoundland and the premier of Newfoundland feel very strongly about this bill. However, imagine the sense of violation that the premier of Quebec would feel, and, certainly what the premier of Alberta would feel, even more so, if, unilaterally, the federal government, which initially gave them the lands which are now James Bay and the lands which are now the tar sands, were to say, "Well, that was not really in the public interest. We want to revoke that unilaterally"? That would just show Your Honour—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his allotted time has expired.

Some hon. Members: More, more!

Mr. Nowlan: I just want to conclude with one sentence. It is rather ironic to me—I am going to be very unprovocative tonight—it is really an amazing thing to me—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With all due respect, the hon. member has already exceeded his time by two minutes.

Some hon. Members: More, more!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We need the unanimous consent of the House to proceed. There is not unanimous consent of the House.

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, at an earlier stage of this debate, the hon. member for Burin-St. George's (Mr. Simmons) made a few remarks. I think it is high time that we again put the record straight, even at the expense of being somewhat repetitive. Perhaps, though he may be a slow learner, at long last he might be able to take it in. First there was some correspondence between the then prime minister of Canada, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition

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(Mr. Clark) and the Premier of Newfoundland, Mr. Peckford, and I think it only proper that some of that correspondence be read into the record once more.

● (2050)

On August 23, 1979, Premier Peckford wrote to the then prime minister of Canada in the following terms:

On a number of occasions we have discussed the ownership of the mineral resources of Newfoundland's continental margin. In those discussions, I outlined to you the province's legal and moral claims to ownership and the importance which I place on this subject.

To restate my position briefly, I regard the development of the province's offshore mineral resources as both the greatest hope and greatest challenge facing us. The development of these resources in accordance with the priorities and objectives of the province would enable Newfoundland to become a strong member of an enhanced Canadian Confederation. On the other hand, the development of these resources at a rate, or in a manner, which is inappropriate to the province would do irreparable damage to our social and economic wellbeing.

It is our belief that this challenge can only be met if the province has ownership of, and jurisdiction over, its offshore mineral resources.

I wish to emphasize the next portion and bring it to the attention of members opposite. It reads:

Accordingly, we greatly appreciate your support of Newfoundland's position and the position of the federal Conservative party that Newfoundland's undersea resources should be treated constitutionally in the same manner as if they were on land.

That is Premier Peckford's understanding of the position adopted by the then prime minister of Canada and it is spelled out quite clearly.

Let me read some of the then prime minister's answer to Mr. Peckford. In part, this letter dated September 14, 1979, reads:

As you pointed out during our meeting, the strong feelings which Newfoundland has expressed on the offshore mineral resources issue down through the years have flowed from its history. It is fitting, therefore, that I confirm to you, the Premier of Newfoundland, the adherence of the Government of Canada to the principles enunciated. At the same time, however, I wish to take the opportunity presented by the publication of our exchange of letters to confirm that the Government of Canada is prepared to see these principles applied to the resolution of the offshore issue with all provinces concerned. Indeed I am sending a copy of this letter to all the Premiers because all are interested in the matter to some degree and will, in due time, have to deal with it in constitutional discussions.

Attached to that letter was an annex. Its heading reads "Basic Principles Concerning Offshore Mineral Resources". The following is the first item:

The province of Newfoundland should own the mineral resources of the continental margin off its coast in so far as Canada is entitled to exercise sovereign rights over these resources in accordance with international law. Such ownership should be, to the extent possible, of the same nature as if these resources were located within the boundaries of the province. The legislative jurisdiction of the province should, to the extent possible, be the same as for those resources within the boundaries of the province.

I will not read items 2 and 3 because they go on to reaffirm the position. But let me read item 4 of the annex to the letter dated September 14, 1979, from the then prime minister of Canada to Mr. Peckford. Item number 4 reads:

The above principles will be further confirmed and implemented by the signing of an agreement between the Government of Canada and the Govern-