

I want to say also, Mr. Chairman—I think perhaps this ought to be said some time—I have been testifying before committees of this House and the other House for a long time. I am impressed with the number of your members who appear, considering their manifold duties and commitments. I just do not see how you manage to have so many so often. I am impressed also with the degree of the questioning and their attendance here.

I should like, if I may, to read my statement and I will try to read it quickly.

Mr. MACDONALD. Yes, sir.

Mr. TALLY. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, a cynical clinche of French politics is: The more things change, the more they remain the same.

About H.R. 5348 and related bills, the cynicism is more chilling: The more things progress, the more these bills want us to go backward.

That great southerner, Sam Rayburn, no less concerned than the sponsors of these bills with history and the proper division of responsibility between States and the National Government, and in the far less complicated and stressful times of a generation ago, fathered in 1935 this jurisdiction of the FPC to regulate wholesale electric rates—because the FPC, being a national authority, was the only authority which would protect all our people.

How much greater today the danger. How much greater today the need. Nearly 95 percent, actually 97 percent by the National Power Survey, of the electric energy of America flows through a few great grid systems of our land from coast to coast, border to border.

Recent area and regional blackouts have taught that we need more, not less, national supervision of the safety, reliability, and economic aspects of electric generation and transmission. Unenlightened thinking can turn off the lights all over America.

This business of electricity is the largest business in our country. And technology in this business in the past 30 years has made it a continental, unitary business.

No Canute command of these bills can roll back these economic and technical tides. And no Congress should repeal the protection Americans need and have and can have only by Federal Power Commission jurisdiction.

I represent the North Carolina Municipally Owned Electric Systems Association. We are 73 cities and towns of North Carolina, and we serve as our customers about 1 million of the citizens of North Carolina.

We purchase, in all but a few of the 73 cases, our power at wholesale from private utility companies, and retail it to our citizens.

These bills pose the greatest threat of this generation to fair rates for our people and the general economy of our cities and other communities owning and operating their own electric distribution systems.

Under the present Federal Power Act the Federal Power Commission, in general, has supervisory authority over rates charged by private utility companies for sales at wholesale of power to such cities, cooperatives, and other such groups who, in turn, retail electric power to their citizens and members.

This authority is based upon the vast interstate power pool interconnections of these private power companies.