

International Rivers

concerned. I am saying this for the benefit of the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton.

Mr. Montgomery: He already knew that and spoke of it himself.

Mr. Thomas: I am glad the hon. member said that because I am absolutely amazed at the statement he made in the house last night and I am going to read from his speech.

Mr. Fulton: It will be a damn sight better than the one you are making yourself.

Mr. Thomas: That is your judgment, but it will not get you anywhere. Here is what the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton said, as reported at page 1053 of *Hansard*:

I am not going to take very long in this debate, because I do not want to become involved in any dispute between parties sitting to my left and the government. I am not particularly concerned whether or not a dam is built on the Columbia river—although thus far the debate has been directed to that one province.

He went on to say:

The minister may not intend that this measure should apply,—

He was referring to the Saint John river. I continue:

—and no doubt it would not be made to apply; but if the measure reaches the statute books in its present form I am afraid that it could be so interpreted. Therefore when the bill is in the committee stage I suggest that it should be made more specific, and the interpretation of what constitutes an international river should be set out more clearly, so that there could be no doubt about it. It would be preferable to have rivers like the Saint John and the St. Croix listed as exceptions.

In the closing paragraph of his speech he said this:

I am not saying that I support the bill as it is, but I do support the principle.

If the application of this bill could prove to be damaging to the people of New Brunswick, if it is made to apply to the Saint John and the St. Croix rivers, then it is equally damaging to the people of British Columbia, as far as the Columbia river basin is concerned.

Mr. Johnston (Bow River): Not in his judgment, though.

Mr. Thomas: How in the name of heaven can an hon. member rise in his place in this house and say: I do not care how much it damages other people so long as it does not apply to me personally or the people I represent. I wonder what the hon. member would say if he introduced legislation to help the potato growers of his riding, and we said: we are not interested in the potato growers because it is not of local interest; throw it out. We are just as interested in the people of New Brunswick in this regard

as we are in the people of Alberta and of British Columbia, and if it is dangerous to us, then it is dangerous to them. If it had no application to either one of those provinces and applied only to New Brunswick, if we thought it was an infringement upon the rights of the province of New Brunswick, we would certainly back it up.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Thomas: We would certainly vote against it, and strike it down, if at all possible, and I would expect the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton to take the same stand on something that he does not want for his own constituents.

Mr. Johnston (Bow River): He never thought of that.

Mr. Montgomery: The only thing is, you are a little previous. We have not come to a decision to know where we stand on that yet.

Mr. Thomas: The hon. member made it perfectly clear that he did not know whether he wanted to support the bill as it stood, but he was in favour of the principle.

Mr. Montgomery: Certainly.

Mr. Thomas: In spite of the fact that he did not want it to apply to his own people. It is all right if they clamp down on British Columbia so long as they do not touch New Brunswick. That is not an attitude that an hon. member should take in this house on a bill of this magnitude.

Mr. Montgomery: That is only your opinion.

Mr. Thomas: Talk so we can hear you. It is on *Hansard*, and I quoted it.

Mr. Montgomery: That is all right; that is only your opinion of my stand.

Mr. Thomas: There can be no mistake so far as the interpretation of that statement is concerned.

As was mentioned before, the whole argument of those speaking in favour of the bill seems to be that British Columbia is exporting water, or power, or both. They are not exporting anything, Mr. Speaker. When he spoke yesterday the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Philpott) said that this agreement could well upset the delicate plans of negotiations of the international joint commission; that he regretted very much that this thing was pushed in at this time because of the nature of the negotiations, and that we might throw everything that we have ever done out the window.

Mr. Byrne: That is precisely the argument.