

*Columbia River Treaty*

future for 60 years and in some respects even beyond that time and deals with many highly technical engineering matters, are necessarily so complex that to debate them in detail would require many weeks or many months. However, we are going to try to highlight and emphasize what we believe to be the main issues. Let me make it clear at once that we are not opposed to all treaties. We are not against the co-operative development of this international river. We are not in favour of going it alone. It is this particular treaty that we regard as not being in the best interests of Canada. We are not anti-American, but we do not believe that our friends in the United States will respect us one whit less because we stand up firmly for what we believe to be in the interests of Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since I have spoken in these fairly definite terms about our view of the treaty, what are the major aspects of the treaty we criticize? I do not propose, but some of my colleagues will, to go into a careful analysis of the treaty in so far as it affects two important aspects. One of these is flood control. One of the purposes of this treaty, in part, is to provide for flood control by dams on the Canadian part of the river, and we are to receive certain payments for that. Whether or not the details of the treaty in that respect are satisfactory or adequate, some of my colleagues will outline later. I do not propose to discuss the matter. I do not propose to discuss the question of whether the projects proposed in this particular treaty or the projects envisaged by sequence 9A, commonly known as the McNaughton plan, will provide most satisfactorily for the generation of hydroelectric power. We recognize that the generation of hydroelectric power is extremely important, now and in the future, in relation to any proposal for the development of the Columbia river on an international basis or on any other basis. I do not propose to discuss whether or not we have been paid adequately for the downstream benefits that the projects proposed by the treaty will make possible, or whether other projects were more suitable in the interests of Canada. I will leave discussion of these matters to my colleagues.

I want to say this, that our major objection to this treaty can be summed up in a single word: water. We believe that the future interests of Canada in the use of water for purposes of irrigation and other consumptive purposes, have not been secured by this

[Mr. Brewin.]

treaty. In fact, we believe they have been given away without a cent being paid for them by our friends in the United States. This is the underlying issue—the future importance of water to future generations of this country; and that, we say, is the core of our objection to this particular treaty.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I think my hon. friend will recognize that there are those who take strongly the view that there is no basis for that statement.

**Mr. Brewin:** I appreciate that, and that is why I am going to develop it and try my best to demonstrate to this house, within the time limit available, why we say the right of diversion for these consumptive purposes is not adequately protected by this particular treaty.

Let me first of all state—and I am not an engineer and I do not propose to give engineering evidence—that the use of water is increasingly important to the maintenance and development of our civilization, and the demand for flows of water for irrigation and other consumptive purposes, and multiple purposes, is a *sine qua non*. It is a necessary condition of the growing development of our country, and it is because this treaty does not—and I repeat the word “not”—in our opinion provide adequately for the potential diversion, perhaps 20, 30, 40 or 50 years from now, into the prairie provinces arid area, and because in our view it shuts the door to that, we say this treaty is not in the interests of Canada as a whole.

I am fully aware—because I spent a good deal of time listening to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and other witnesses assert, with the force with which the Secretary of State for External Affairs usually makes his assertions—that in fact this treaty contains in article XIII adequate provision for diversion. I want to deal with that particular matter at this moment. It is perfectly true that the treaty explicitly provides for diversion for consumptive purposes, but lying within that phrase is an ambiguity which has never been cleared up in the evidence and which I believe cannot be cleared up. This is where the difficulty lies. “Consumptive purposes” are defined explicitly in the treaty so as to exclude the use of diversion for the generation of power.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the evidence before the committee that was produced by representatives of the government of Saskatchewan and