

Columbia River Treaty

regard, Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a portion of a report in the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* of October 31, 1963, a report of a meeting of the Saskatchewan rivers development association. It states:

Diversion of waters from western and northern Canadian rivers into Saskatchewan was advocated by two dinner speakers at the Saskatchewan rivers development association annual meeting here Friday.

One of the speakers was the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Mr. Laing), and the report states:

Calling for a greater understanding and sympathy with the problems of all parts of Canada rather than just one province, Mr. Laing said the prairies would suffer a crisis water shortage unless flow is increased.

In addition to predicted population increases, Mr. Laing added that to produce a ton of wheat, 1,500 tons of water are required. Water is essential for agriculture, domestic and industrial use, energy and transportation, he said.

Saskatchewan and the prairie provinces in general have the lowest precipitation rate in Canada—16 inches per year, and as low as 12 inches. Evaporation and transpiration through plants takes up most of this, leaving only an approximate three inches for run-off into rivers, the lowest rate in Canada.

To add to this, Mr. Speaker, there is another report in the *Times-Herald* of May 26, 1964, which originated from Calgary. The opening paragraph of this report reads:

Alberta proposes to retain some of the water now flowing through the North and South Saskatchewan river systems into Saskatchewan and Manitoba when the province needs additional supplies. R. E. Bailey, chief engineer for the Alberta water resources department, said Monday.

I think these news reports indicate why we are concerned in southern Saskatchewan over future water sources. In this regard I wish to read an excerpt from an editorial in the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* of May 19, 1964, which deals with the brief that was presented by the government of Saskatchewan with respect to the Columbia river treaty to the standing committee on external affairs, on May 14. This excerpt from the editorial recalls that at page 82 of the brief it is stated:

The government of Canada should insist that our rivers be viewed as a part of the total water supply of Canada and it has an obligation to ensure the best distribution and use of this water for the nation as a whole.

I want to obtain a definite assurance from the minister in direct language, not in his usual language which is sometimes very difficult to understand clearly, that the treaty does not deny the province of Saskatchewan the right to divert water from the Columbia river into the south Saskatchewan river if

such a diversion is feasible and can be carried out in co-operation with the province and the authorities concerned.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): There is no doubt about it, no doubt at all.

Mr. Pascoe: Perhaps the hon. gentleman would give us that assurance when he speaks. As for the brief submitted by the government of Saskatchewan to the external affairs committee on May 14, let me say I am not a member of that committee but I did hear some of the presentations. The arguments in favour of Saskatchewan's right to economically feasible water diversions were clearly presented. There are two questions I should like the minister to answer. I represent the city of Moose Jaw and a large part of the city of Regina. These two cities depend almost completely on water from the south Saskatchewan river which has been pumped over a height of land down the Qu'Appelle valley but which will flow down by gravity when the South Saskatchewan river dam is complete and the huge reservoir is filled. As Moose Jaw and Regina continue to grow, will the Columbia river treaty deny them the right to have water diverted from the Columbia if, as I say, this is feasible? The hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) states that in his opinion the treaty does not deny this right. Will the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) give us this positive assurance?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I have already given that assurance.

Mr. Pascoe: Well, I should like to have the hon. gentleman stand up and put it on the record.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): In answer to the hon. member's question, as was pointed out in the evidence by many witnesses, including the former minister of justice who was the negotiator with respect to the treaty signed in 1961, there is no doubt that article XIII (1) provides for a clear right of diversion for consumptive use.

Mr. Pascoe: Thank you. I wish to have that on record. I think I have heard the minister define what "consumptive use" means.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That is provided for in the section on interpretation of the treaty.

Mr. Pascoe: My second question concerns the stand taken by the government of Saskatchewan. The brief which the external affairs committee considered was put forward