

*Beauharnois Power Project*

goods by means of this energy will depend to a great extent upon what the manufacturers will have to pay for the use of it. That is a matter which not only concerns the central provinces but the maritimes and western provinces as well. I believe the people of western Canada are getting tired of carrying the burden which they are carrying. May I point out to the Prime Minister that only recently there took place in Australia something which should be of great concern to the government of this country, namely the decision of the people of western Australia to withdraw from confederation. How long can this country expect the western and the maritime provinces to carry the load they are carrying? If the government would take advantage of every opportunity to reduce costs of production so that lower prices may be secured, then I think probably the rest of Canada would be satisfied. But if we throw away this heritage and permit it to be exploited by a set of gangsters for which the people of Canada have no use and who have probably done more harm to Canada than any other class of people I can think of—if the government is going to permit that kind of thing to go on, then I am not very much impressed as to the future unity of Canada.

Mr. J. S. WOODSWORTH (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, on two previous occasions I have attempted to back up, as well as I could, the presentations made with regard to Beauharnois by the hon. members for Acadia (Mr. Gardiner) and Bow River (Mr. Garland). I feel I cannot do other than add my observations again to-day. I know that in one of the editorials of a recent edition of a western newspaper it was pointed out that the net results of the efforts of the hon. member for Acadia, leading the group in this corner in his presentation of the case had been simply to take away a certain enterprise from a small corporation, and turn it over to a large one. I think perhaps that is not altogether an unfair criticism. But I should like to say that this is not the fault of hon. members in this corner of the house. Several years ago we did our best to expose something which we believed was inimical to public welfare, and which involved a very serious graft and a very considerable amount of political corruption. We did our best to present our point of view to the public, and there is no doubt at all that certain individuals were exposed. The public were aroused. As everyone knows a committee of this house investigated the matter up to a certain point; then it was dropped. However certain mem-

[Mr. Gardiner.]

bers of the Senate were found guilty of practices which made it necessary that they should be dealt with.

All that was done. Public attention was called to the matter, and the whole question was then placed squarely before the present government. If we in this corner have failed to secure what we set out to accomplish, namely the nationalization of this great power scheme, or the bringing it in some way under the control of the public and making the power developed available for the use of the public at the lowest rates possible, it is not the fault of the members in this corner. The government itself must be held accountable for the situation.

It seems to me almost incredible that the government to-day can sit silent, refusing to give any statement with regard to a matter of this importance. Some of us may be regarded as cranks, we may not be taken very seriously from the political standpoint, because of the smallness of our numbers, but let me say that this is a matter that arouses tremendous interest throughout the entire dominion. We were blamed a few years ago because we had not carried the matter further. We had not the political weight to carry it further at that time. We could simply put it up to the country and the government. The government had full power to deal with the question, and to a certain extent the government did deal with the question. It realized that the enterprise must not fail, and it came to the assistance of the bondholders. It gave certain guarantees to the banks. But there it stopped.

Now I cannot see that at this stage of this session any useful purpose would be served by covering again the ground that we so thoroughly covered on previous occasions, but I would suggest very briefly one or two points. As has been urged by previous speakers, the rights of the collateral trust bondholders do not seem to be protected. They are protesting against this, they are calling upon the members of this house to do something to protect their rights. It seems to me that we as members have a duty to voice these protests and call upon the government to take some action. The government apparently believes itself so firmly entrenched that it can well afford to disregard not only public opinion on general questions but actually the cases brought before it by members of other parties. I say that the rights of the collateral trust bondholders are apparently not protected. Further than that I think it is obvious from the statements made by the hon. member for Bow River that the navigation rights on the