

Columbia River Treaty

ated, and during the course of proceedings this morning, if I am not mistaken, he was recognized at least three times. It is the duty of the Chair to recognize different members no matter which section of the house they may be sitting in, and if the hon. member was not recognized as quickly as possible I can only ask his indulgence.

Mr. Churchill: I simply suggest, Mr. Speaker, there are 95 members in the official opposition party.

My question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Ten days ago I asked a question of the minister concerning a military exercise in the United States, and I am wondering whether the minister has had time to procure an answer to that question.

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Yes, I have, Mr. Speaker. The hon. gentleman was referring to a military exercise called "Desert Strike". I can confirm that there was such an exercise but no members of the Canadian armed forces were attending as observers.

Mr. Churchill: May I ask the minister why it took so long to get an answer to that question?

Mr. Hellyer: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. gentleman knows that I have had the answer for two or three days, but with the pressure of the long question periods it has not been easy to get the floor and give the answer.

Mr. Churchill: May I ask the minister why, for six days, he failed to rise to get the Speaker's attention to answer this question? I have kept a record of his attendance, and I have noted he made no attempt to answer the question.

Mr. Pigeon: The same old bunch.

POWER**COLUMBIA RIVER—APPROVAL OF RATIFICATION OF TREATY**

The house resumed, from Thursday, June 4, consideration of the motion of Mr. Martin (Essex East):

That it is expedient that the houses of parliament do approve the ratification of the treaty between Canada and the United States of America relating to co-operative development of the water resources of the Columbia river basin, signed at Washington on January 17, 1961, and the consequent coming into force of the protocol thereto annexed to the exchange of notes signed at Washington on January 22, 1964, and that this house do approve the same.

Mr. Colin Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes I have left at my disposal I want to deal briefly with the sequence of events which led to the change in the plans of the government of Canada with regard to this treaty.

It was extremely difficult in the committee to get clear and unequivocal statements from government witnesses as to the course of events in the negotiations, but it did become clear that at one point at least the alternative plan of the Bull river-Luxor diversion, the elimination of the high Arrow dam and the construction of the low Arrow dam at Murphy was the basis of the plans presented by Canada to the United States. They were, incidentally, approved by both sections of the international joint commission.

It would appear that at this point the government of British Columbia made an intervention which prohibited the following of that plan. There were at the time press reports, which were never denied, of the complete disarray into which the Canadian negotiation team was thrown by this intervention on the part of the government of British Columbia.

I think it is well that we should examine what possible reason there could have been for this intervention. The plan which was presented at that time would have produced, according to the Montreal engineering company, the cheapest possible power production; it would have afforded adequate flood control to meet the requirements of the United States, and it would have supplied the basis for financial arrangements with the United States concerning downstream benefits. It seems strange that there should be this intervention on the part of British Columbia, and one has to look somewhere for the reason.

I think the reason can only be that at that time Mr. Bennett became fully taken up with his Peace river scheme, and it was essential to his purpose to make sure there would be no immediate production of electrical power on the Columbia system in spite of the fact that power from the Columbia system, according to all expert opinion, would be the cheapest power available to the industrial section of the lower mainland of British Columbia. Had Peace river power been available at a cost which would have enabled the provincial government to supply low cost energy to the southern areas of the province there might have been something to this. There were a number of rumours put about, never with any sound technical basis, that it would be possible to deliver power from the