

*Flooding of Skagit River Valley*

• (11:10 a.m.)

In these circumstances I think it is urgent that the minister and the government act with great vigour. When the minister speaks about studying the report and then taking action, quite frankly this does not suggest very much to me in the way of vigour. I would have thought the minister would promptly study the report and would have come before the House with a definite recommendation on how he and the government intend to proceed. It is necessary to act with vigour to preserve a valley that the International Joint Commission has recognized as important, a valley that it has recognized as being threatened. I hope, therefore, that the minister will in fact act with more vigour than his statement to the House this morning seems to indicate. Indeed, now that the Prime Minister has demonstrated that he has great success with President Nixon and he has been able to make breakthroughs there and to persuade the President to give fantastic assurances to Canada, perhaps the minister may be able to persuade the Prime Minister to take up the case directly with the President.

**Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, the issue of the Skagit Valley has been before the House for almost two years now and today the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Davis) has presented us with a very attractively wrapped Christmas present. Our problem is that we like the wrapping but we are not certain at the moment what is inside. We hope that some time we can open it up and perhaps even ventilate the whole issue. That would be nice.

The statement of the minister seems to be hopeful. The government seems to be saying rather piously that at the moment the flooding should not be proceeded with. The statement also seems to confirm what the people of British Columbia have felt for some time, that since this valley is one of the last remaining unspoiled recreational resources adjacent to a large population centre it should not be flooded.

Unfortunately, when the agreement of 1942 was reached and the decision to go ahead was made, environmental and recreational matters were not of the consequence that they are today. There was not general public appreciation of the value of this kind of unspoiled resource. The International Joint Commission because of the terms of reference given to it on April 7, 1971, could hardly reverse its position of 1942 even though it may have genuinely felt that the earlier decision was in error. The commission was locked in by government terms of reference so narrow that all it could comment on was the extent of the environmental consequences. I felt last April that this was a delaying tactic and that ultimately the axe would fall on the Skagit Valley and we were just going to be let down easily. I suppose today I am still suspicious or at least fearful that the flooding will occur eventually. I hope we can have an end to or at least an amelioration of the environmental irritants—that seems to be a popular word lately—in Canada-U.S. relations. There have been several environmental irritants lately, as well as economic ones, involving such things as nuclear blasts, oil tankers and the Skagit Valley.

I think it is important that the government indicate frankly what it is going to do. The minister's statement

[Mr. Stanfield.]

seems to say that more time is required to study this matter, that the government is going to wind it down, and diffuse the issue. It will not satisfy the people of British Columbia to learn before too long that the minister has allowed the flooding to be proceeded with. What BC citizens want to know is what the government is going to do to stop it. That is really the only solution that will be acceptable in British Columbia.

Perhaps the minister, as he hints in the last paragraph of the statement, might be encouraged to open up bilateral talks with the United States in the hope that the people in Washington, who are also aware of the public concern for environmental matters these days, will realize it is sheer lunacy to continue to flood recreational areas near large urban centres. This will be in keeping with the sentiment in Canada that as Canadians we are no longer content to be hewers of wood and storers of water.

[Translation]

**Mr. Leonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that I received at the very last minute the text of the report the minister has just tabled, and in English only. However, I shall not deprive myself of my right to congratulate the International Joint Commission on its study and on the report it has submitted.

We are glad the hon. minister has, according to his statement, committed himself to follow closely the consequences of construction of the dam and, if possible, to prevent it in order not to deprive the people of Canada again of their environment, their heritage and to ensure a sound environment for the future.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### WAYS AND MEANS

TABLING OF MOTIONS—DESIGNATION OF ORDER OF THE DAY TO DEBATE MOTION RELATING TO 1971 TAXATION YEAR

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, pursuant to Standing Order 60 I am laying on the table two notices of ways and means motions which follow from the statement by the minister on October 14, 1971, and which supersede the notice of ways and means tabled that day.

One of these notices of ways and means relates to the 1971 taxation year and the other relates to the 1972 taxation year. I would be obliged, Mr. Speaker, if you would designate an order of the day for consideration on Monday of the notice of ways and means relating to the 1971 taxation year.

\* \* \*

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS

SUGGESTED PRESENCE OF MADAME DEFARGE FOR TAX BILL VOTE—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 43 I ask