

*Supply—Northern Affairs*

McNaughton for many things, but more particularly for the way he stood up for Canadian interests and Canadian rights at that time and later.

The negotiations were transferred back to government representatives at one stage. Then they went back to the international joint commission, and I believe there was a change of membership on the United States side of the commission which made those discussions a little more constructive than they had been earlier.

As we all know, eventually the treaty was signed by the plenipotentiaries of the two governments. It was signed in the dying days of the Republican administration of the United States with what appears to us over here, in the light of what has happened since, unnecessary haste. I say that because surely it is unwise for any Canadian government, in diplomatic negotiations with a foreign country, to put its signature to an international agreement which cannot be implemented without the co-operation of one or more provinces of Canada until it is absolutely certain that this co-operation has been achieved. Once a plenipotentiary acting on behalf of Canada does sign an international agreement, Canada as such accepts an international obligation to carry out that agreement. Our word as a country is pledged to the extent of accepting the obligation and implementing the treaty once that treaty, of course, has been ratified.

Therefore any federal government should be very, very careful, to say the least in accepting that kind of international obligation on behalf of Canada until it is certain the obligation can be implemented. In this case, and in many other cases, because we are a federal state implementation will require the active and specific co-operation of the provinces concerned, in this case British Columbia. I recall—and this will be in contrast with the way this particular treaty was negotiated—that when the St. Lawrence waterway agreement was negotiated there was no difficulty with the province of Ontario in implementing that treaty.

I know perfectly well that the representative of British Columbia took part in the Columbia negotiations. I know there may have been reason to believe during those days that this representative was in accord with what was going on. Perhaps there was some reason to assume that he and the provincial government of British Columbia accepted all the details of the treaty as eventually signed. There may have been some reason to assume that, but we know there was not sufficient reason, because the assumption was certainly based, as we know now, on a false premise.

[Mr. Pearson.]

The treaty has been signed. The United States Senate has approved it by an almost unprecedented majority so far as a treaty of this kind is concerned; I think the vote was 91 to 1. As my hon. friend from Kootenay West pointed out, there has been a great deal of satisfaction in the United States over the negotiation and ratification of this treaty. Presumably the states of the United States which are involved have been very happy about it, because apparently there has been no difficulty with them in the discussion of the matter in the Senate and in ratification. Indeed, the United States and the interests concerned in that country seem to be entirely satisfied with this treaty.

The fact that the United States is satisfied does not necessarily make it a bad treaty from the Canadian point of view. The difference is that in this country there are apparently many doubts raised about the relative advantages of this treaty to Canada, and the province of British Columbia is showing no desire at the present time, as far as one can gather, to co-operate with the federal government in a way which will make the implementation of this treaty immediately possible.

We on this side assumed that when this treaty was signed, before ratification the normal constitutional procedure would be followed and it would be submitted to the House of Commons for consideration; and only after that consideration and approval, if it were given, would the act of ratification take place. We were given some reason to believe in the early days of this session that the submission of this treaty would take place not long after signing and would go before the committee on external affairs. There it could be given the searching kind of examination which its importance warrants, and the members of the committee could ascertain whether Canadian interests had been safeguarded in all possible respects in the terms of this treaty as it was signed.

So far as the terms of the treaty are concerned, we on this side will reserve our views on that point until the treaty has been submitted to the committee on external affairs, after we have listened to experts and especially General McNaughton, whom I am sure the committee will wish to examine. However, this cannot be done now because of the lack of co-operation between the federal government and the provincial government of British Columbia; because British Columbia is now raising doubts about this treaty; because the financial arrangements which are necessary as between the province and the federal governments before it can be carried out have not been made; because the provincial government apparently has doubts as to whether the price of power