

Columbia River Treaty

river treaty. Even if I intend to be brief, I should like to follow the example set a few minutes ago by the hon. member for Cariboo (Mr. Leboe) and congratulate the chairman of the external affairs committee, the hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Matheson), who did a splendid job and who greatly facilitated our task. He was helpful to me in this sense that he provided me with a truly competent interpreter who made it possible for me to follow with great interest the evidence given and the statements made at the 50-odd meetings of the committee during which we heard the pros and cons of the project.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I cannot say as much for the internal organization of the house, for here I have the English version of the external affairs committee's report, number 29, dated May 27, while as far as the French version is concerned, I only have report number 3, dated April 9. This seems to indicate a fairly wide gap between the publication dates of the English and the French versions of the committee's reports.

Sometimes it is necessary to review the evidence which was given and I could not take advantage of that opportunity in view of the fact that the French reports always arrive long after the English reports.

I raised this matter myself a few days ago in this house, on May 13. Besides, it had been done on previous occasions, many many times, but unfortunately we do not see any sign of improvement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I did not intervene while the hon. member was making his comments, but I am afraid that he cannot keep on dealing with the question he just raised. He should, as much as possible, confine his remarks to the subject now under discussion.

Mr. Laprise: In any case, I had completed what I wanted to say on that matter, but I simply wanted to point out the time elapsed between the two versions.

Mr. Côté (Chicoutimi): The injustice.

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Speaker, during the study in committee, I was able to see the wonderful work which had been done for several years by the engineers and technicians who have been in a position to see the pros and cons of that extraordinary project which will no doubt go down in our country's history—control hydraulic power and put it at the disposal of mankind and the people of this continent.

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About that power which we try to harness more and more for our own use, I read the following:

Power was defined thus: "Substitution of mechanical energy for human energy, of mechanical action for human labour".

Electric energy is really such a power.

In his "Geography and World Power", Fairgrieve states: "The power with which Greece achieved such great things in every sphere of human progress was mainly provided by slaves. Each Greek, each Greek family, had five helots about whom we do not think when talking about Greeks; however, they were the ones who accounted for the main power of the Greeks".

We are fortunate enough to have great water power in Canada; the Columbia river is one of the greatest in the country. I feel, we should commend the government of British Columbia, which wants to turn this resource to account, and do everything in our power to help and to hasten the fruition of this plan. Indeed, during this debate, I have heard nothing which could hurt the prerogatives of any region of this country. Now, in my opinion, we have nothing to lose by using a natural resource of which we can take great advantage.

The opposition of some people prevented hasty action and prompted us to be careful. I feel, Mr. Speaker, that those critics were necessary, even if they did extend the debate. But it seems to me that the Canadian people and, to a certain extent, the American people should be able to take advantage as soon as possible of those resources which are being wasted.

The Columbia river has always flowed and will always flow through part of the United States; whether we like it or not, we can do nothing about it. Now, in view of the fact that we have no doubt the advantage of carrying out the necessary work in co-operation with the United States, I think that the Canadian government and parliament should ratify this agreement as soon as possible, so that the work may start quickly, be successful and help the Canadian people through the creation of a labour market, so that our workers may also be able to take advantage of it. I feel that not only the citizens of British Columbia, but many workers outside of that province will take advantage of it.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our group I say that we agree with this project.

Besides, the evidence which was given indicates that the government of British Co-