

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

[English]

Items Nos. 22, 5 and 4 allowed to stand by unanimous consent.

BRITISH COLUMBIA HYDRO—JOINT FUNDING AND PROPOSED DAMS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena) moved:

That an humble address be presented to His Excellency praying that he will cause to be laid before this House before January 31, 1981, copies of all correspondence, telegrams or other documents exchanged between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and British Columbia Hydro relating to joint funding and proposed dams in British Columbia including the names of the 20 salmon streams slated for damming.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on my motion for the production of papers. Hon. members of the House will recall that on November 20, 1980 I asked the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. LeBlanc) a question related to a document I had received from his department. That document was entitled the "Western Vision Blueprint", and talked about the possibility of the federal government and B.C. Hydro damming a number of rivers in British Columbia. Members will remember the indignant response the minister made, when trying to answer the question. The minister said that his officials had briefed me on the document when, in fact, they had called to plead with me not to release it.

The minister then went on to say that the issue would panic people in British Columbia. He said that outside the House, of course, because he was not able to respond adequately to me during the House of Commons question period.

I asked the minister questions about this so-called "blueprint" because of the concern I have over the possibility of this minister allowing rivers in British Columbia to be dammed without due concern for the fisheries resource. Despite the fact that the report says, and I quote:

That B.C. Hydro is looking for ways in which to meet peak power demands—many of these projects could have very attractive benefit cost ratios—there is an opportunity through joint development for both parties to meet their goals. We know B.C. Hydro is interested; we also know there are perhaps 20 or more salmon streams that would lend themselves to this approach.

That is taken from the document I received. It was prepared by Department of Fisheries and Oceans personnel, and I think it is important for hon. members of this House to have the names of those rivers and to know just exactly what this joint approach to hydro development in British Columbia involves.

The minister has refused to say which 20 rivers are going to be dammed and also by his silence has indicated he is not willing to tell the House what discussions have gone on between his department and B.C. Hydro.

It is therefore clear to me that when the government issues a report that says there are 20 rivers to be dammed, that identifies a five-year funding program and a financial flow, and all of this is set out in a very clear, technical way in the report, someone in the department of the Minister of Fisheries

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and Oceans has been looking at this very seriously. How does the government know that B.C. Hydro is interested? What kinds of correspondence and discussions have been held between the two? Or are we to assume that the minister and Bob Bonner have been quietly communicating telepathically?

In light of the minister's refusal to provide the House with any additional information whatsoever, I placed my motion on the Order Paper to have copies of correspondence, telegrams, or other documents tabled in the House by January 31, 1981. On December 17, 1980, the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Collenette) asked me to withdraw the motion. I asked to have the motion transferred for debate. We are going to have the debate today and at a future date.

After some research, I am glad to be able to speak in a more technical manner on this issue today. Perhaps I should not say "glad" because some of the information I have come across leads me to seriously question the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council's statement that no documents exist regarding the issue. Even more importantly is the information that indicates that this government is willing to sell out the fisheries resource in British Columbia, just as they have done on the Kemano issue, Amax, the Fraser River and others.

I am sure Your Honour will recall that on several dozen occasions I raised the question of Amax, a mining company which is being allowed to dump 12,000 tons of toxic effluent a day into Alice Arm. The statements I made in this House were refuted by the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen), the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro), the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Roberts), and need I go on? My statements have now been proven to be correct. Amax was, in fact, closed this morning because the tailings were resurfacing.

It comes right down to the crunch. If a document is prepared by fisheries and oceans, has a flow chart, gives a specific number of rivers, and names the actual figures which are under discussion for these joint developments, I think that when an hon. member gives notice of motion for the production of papers that he knows exist, or at least has some reason to suppose they exist, there is a responsibility on the government side to provide them as sheer information. We do not have a freedom of information act. It is important to hon. members, particularly those from British Columbia, regarding this issue that we at least be provided with background information, so that we can provide our communities and, in fact, our own members of the legislative assembly in British Columbia with that information and know what is going on and have some sort of a rational planning of hydroelectric development in a province which has had a tragic history of inappropriate dam development.

The truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that at least one document does exist about this government's plan to dam rivers in British Columbia. In July, 1978 Crippen Consultants of Vancouver, B.C., submitted an unsolicited proposal to the