

*Columbia River Treaty*

primary function. If he believes what he says all he has to do is to accept the amendment which we proposed yesterday.

The minister has put up the argument in correspondence with the government of Saskatchewan that, after all, this is not very important, because he said in a letter which he wrote to the premier of Saskatchewan on March 31, 1964, "alternative sources exist for obtaining water supplies for the Saskatchewan river system which on any foreseeable basis are considerably less expensive to develop than a Columbia river diversion into Saskatchewan." But all of the evidence presented by the Saskatchewan government indicates that if you take into consideration a cost benefit study the Columbia is probably the most economical means of bringing water to the prairies.

You cannot base the case on cost per cubic foot. You have also to examine it on the basis of where the water will enter the South Saskatchewan river basin and what benefits it will provide. It is not the function of this house to decide whether diversion of water from the Columbia to the prairies is less expensive or more expensive than diversion from some other river. That is not our business. It will be the business of whatever government is in Saskatchewan and whatever government is in British Columbia at the time to work it out, if they desire to do so. But it is the responsibility of this parliament to see that the right to divert water and the right is kept open for future governments in Saskatchewan and British Columbia to work out an arrangement for such a diversion. I say that this treaty precludes this happening. Because it precludes this happening I think it is a bad treaty, and that it will work great hardship on the people of the prairie provinces.

These people have been through cycles of drought. They have been limited by lack of water in the development of specialized crops. They have been limited as to industrial development. Already many of their urban communities have water shortage problems. Surely it is the function of Canada's parliament to safeguard water supplies so that these people may enjoy them in the years which lie ahead. If this treaty were only for five years I would not worry about it. But this treaty is for 60 years, and if sufficient commitments of water are made to the United States it is virtually forever. Because once we have made commitments and industries have been established in the United

States on the basis of a stated water supply, we, or our children and our children's children, are not going to be able to divert water 70 or 75 years from now. I should have thought that members of the government would have given some consideration to an area of Canada which has suffered so much from drought and which fights against so many natural obstacles to its development, and would have seen to it that the right to divert water would have been retained, and not precluded as it is in this treaty.

I think my time is almost up, Mr. Speaker, and I should like to say in closing that in spite of the lack of interest in this resolution which has been taken by government members it is of vital importance to the people of this country. Whether we take an interest in it or not, I predict that within a few decades there will be a storm of public disapproval against this treaty when once the full implication of its terms is realized by people of Canada. Unfortunately when that time comes their fury cannot be directed against those who are responsible because they will probably have passed from the political scene. Future generations of Canadians will look back to this day and will have a feeling of regret that we have so far forgotten our sense of duty and responsibility as to allow a treaty like this to pass without taking adequate steps to safeguard the interests of future generations.

As far as we in this party are concerned we have made our protest, and we have made it repeatedly. We made it when the matter was first brought before the house. We made it when the minister asked that this matter be referred to the committee on external affairs. Our representatives on the committee, the hon. member for Kootenay West, the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands and the hon. member for Toronto Greenwood, day after day presented our point of view in that committee to the very best of their ability, and I think they did an excellent job. We have in this debate stated our position. We have made it crystal clear that we think this treaty and protocol ought not to be passed in their present form without some clarification of the right of diversion of water where the generation of hydroelectric power is involved. We have made our stand here, Mr. Speaker, and it is on the record. The other members of the house must accept their responsibility if approval is given to this nefarious treaty.