

International Rivers

party that there is much more to it than that. There is to be a supplementary agreement with the Bonneville power authority that is going to become a part of the contract. Well, perhaps that makes the arrangement enforceable, for in my opinion the contract certainly is not enforceable in the form that has been tabled in this house. The hon. member says it is going to be made possible to export British Columbia's share of the power from the United States into Canada, that export is going to be assured. Well, that may change the whole complexion. The purpose of this bill is to make sure that we get information such as may enable us to join with the province in working out a solution that is acceptable in the national interest.

I point out that we think we have a national interest in the power resources of British Columbia. To date the Canadian section of the international joint commission has expended \$2,781,000 in investigations and study of the best use of the water resources of the Columbia river. We have in the estimates that are before the house at the present time a further sum of \$641,360 to be spent during the next fiscal year in continuing the study of the best use of the Columbia river system.

Strangely enough, General McNaughton has not been consulted by the province of British Columbia about this transaction. He tells me that he was in Victoria on the day this contract was signed, and that he did not hear about the agreement until two or three weeks later. I may say that the most disturbed man about this situation is General McNaughton. He sees several years of work thrown away; he sees the program that he hoped to carry out for the Columbia river system made unworkable.

The Arrow lakes are the great natural reservoir of the Columbia river in British Columbia. As I read the contract, it provides that the Kaiser company, an American company that operates an aluminum plant in Seattle, is to have the complete regulation of the water levels in the Arrow lakes. This company has the privilege of storing the water in periods of high water and holding that high water as long as it likes and releasing it as it likes to make up deficiencies in the flow of the Columbia river system below the border.

Mr. Blackmore: To the extent of 3 million acre feet.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Three million acre feet of water happens to be all the water there is in the Arrow lakes that will be controlled by this dam. It must be remembered that this is not a temporary arrangement; it is for 50 years, and renewable after that.

[Mr. Howe (Port Arthur).]

In other words the Kaiser company will regulate the water levels and storage capacity in the Arrow lakes for 50 years and beyond. What can you do with the Columbia river if you have regulation of the Arrow lakes tied up by a corporation outside of Canada?

Frankly, if I wanted to play politics with this matter, which I do not; if I were to forget that I am a member of a government that is responsible for all of Canada, I would not introduce this bill. I would not say a word; I would let the government of British Columbia turn over the Arrow lakes lock, stock and barrel to the Kaiser company of Wilmington, Delaware, for their use and regulation. That would be playing politics. What we are trying to do is prevent a situation that we think is destructive of the best interests of the water resources of British Columbia and of Canada, for British Columbia is a part of the Dominion of Canada.

As I say, if examination proves that we are wrong, what happens? Well, we issue a permit; but we believe that this project is wrong. General McNaughton believes that this is wrong and contrary to the best interests of British Columbia and of Canada. Surely the Canadian section of the international joint commission, which has spent a great deal of money and three or four years of time in studying the possibilities of the Columbia system, have a right to know what the deal is and what effect it will have on the work they have planned for that area. Surely the federal government as a whole should be entitled to see the details of a contract made between Her Majesty's government in British Columbia and a company in the United States of America dealing with the use of a storage basin in Canada; for if there is any recourse for the United States for damage or non-performance that recourse is not going to be against the province of British Columbia, it is going to be against the Dominion of Canada. If there are any claims from outside Canada they will not be filed with the government of British Columbia, they will be filed with the government of Canada.

It seems to me that a great deal of heat has been generated about a bill that simply asks that the information be laid on the table; that evidence be given that this is a prudent contract. We assume that if it can be shown it is not a prudent contract, the British Columbia government would be just as willing to abrogate it as we would be anxious to have it abrogated. If it could be shown that it is a prudent contract, of course a permit would be issued. It is just as simple as that.

Why all the speeches about the waters flowing anyway? Why not sell any power rights we cannot use immediately? We have heard that argument in every debate on hydroelec-