

In view of the fact that the federal government was not aware of these facts and that its officials did not know of them, how could anyone say this is a good treaty for Canada when the costs continue to climb all the time? Prominent engineers have studied this matter. I have received letters from a number of them in Ontario, Quebec and other places. I just mention this in order to say that I think the treaty was signed without a full knowledge of the facts and costs.

So far as Dr. Keenleyside is concerned, I do not know what dams he has built in the past. The minister can read an editorial about him in *The Province*. He has been telling people that this is a good treaty and this is what the federal government wanted, and I have had to contradict him on that point.

I am concerned with this matter. I represent a lot of people who will be affected, and I would say this stalemate provides a good opportunity for the federal government to renegotiate the treaty, to get the facts as to costs, and then proceed on a much sounder basis than we have had in the past. I also suggest that before any further negotiations are carried on, or alterations made in the treaty, we should have a firm agreement with the government of British Columbia.

Mr. Chevrier: May I ask the minister a question in connection with the incident which happened prior to the signing of the treaty? I think the minister said that a letter came from the premier of British Columbia at the time, or just about the time, that the Prime Minister was leaving to sign the treaty. The minister has mentioned this previously but I am not too clear about one point. Did that letter change the understanding with British Columbia materially in so far as the federal government was concerned?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The letter is on the record. A copy of it is on the records of the house.

Mr. Chevrier: I have not got it before me.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): It was tabled a long time ago and I invite the hon. member to look at it.

May I say very briefly in reply to the hon. member for Kootenay West that I do not think his appraisal of the situation is fair or accurate.

Mr. Herridge: It was admitted in evidence before the hearings on the Arrow lakes.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): The hon. member talks about an admission in evidence. It depends who makes the admission.

Mr. Herridge: The great Dr. Keenleyside.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Dr. Keenleyside does not represent the federal government. An admission on the part of Dr. Keenleyside is not an admission that affects the federal government. The fact is that, in the ordinary course, preliminary investigations had been made in relation to matters of an engineering nature that entered into a decision that had to be made. There is a great deal of engineering that obviously had to be undertaken by the provincial government, and that has been going on since. I can assure the hon. member that no time has been lost in that respect. I can assure him that the engineering work has been proceeding and it had to be done before any construction could be undertaken.

Mr. Herridge: We need to estimate the cost.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): No time has been lost, and to give the hon. member an idea of the amount of effort put into this study, the federal government has spent something like \$4 million in the studies. We do not at all accept or share the view put forward by the hon. member that the federal advisers have misled the government or have been incompetent or were misinformed. We do not agree with him in those assertions for one minute.

Mr. Herridge: A number of prominent engineers in Canada do.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): All right; in a matter of this kind, where the views of experts are put forward, it is not unusual to find some differences of opinion. But we have chosen to follow advice that we think is competent and sound, and we think it has been fully supported and buttressed by engineering evidence.

Mr. Chairman, in pleading for discussion relevant to the item may I say that with regard to the report that this item is intended to pay for, the Montreal engineering firm staunchly supports the view that led the government to sign this treaty in the belief that it is one of very great potential benefit to Canada and to British Columbia.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Chairman, the minister gave me a rather curt reply a minute ago.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Not intentionally.

Mr. Chevrier: I thank the minister for that. However, the minister has said, "Look it up in *Hansard* and you will find the letter". I suppose I could do that. I have seen it and I have to draw on my memory, but I think the letter to which the minister refers changed the terms of the understanding between the government of British Columbia and the federal government. If that is the case, as I presume it is, then why did not the government turn back, in the light of that letter,