

*Columbia River Treaty*

make these personal remarks. We were just sympathizing. But what do we find is brought out in the evidence before the committee? There is this fine young Canadian, Mr. Gordon MacNabb, standing, with a shortage of funds and staff, almost alone facing his counterpart, General Istchner and the whole corps of army engineers. We can understand the circumstances in which he finds himself.

During the hearings of the committee we made an effort to obtain information as to what had transpired between the negotiators and we attempted to obtain the minutes of these meetings. They were denied on the ground that they were confidential to the cabinet and covered by the oath of secrecy. However, during the time that Mr. Barry Strayer was giving evidence before the committee for the Saskatchewan government, Mr. E. R. Olson of the Department of Justice sent a note to the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George (Mr. Turner) who read it and later tore it into 62 pieces. It was picked up and we have managed to piece them together again. I am going to read the note.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Herridge:** Let me say this before I read the note. These gentlemen from the Department of External Affairs, the water resources branch and the Department of Agriculture, all federal departments, were sitting at the back of the room and were sending up notes and whispering in the ears of Liberal members. The members of the New Democratic party never got a single note from any one of these gentlemen and they never whispered in our ears once. We feel a bit slighted about this. We think that civil servants should provide the opposition as well as the government with information.

**Mr. Macdonald:** You were not looking for the facts.

**Mr. Herridge:** I have got the note here.

**An hon. Member:** You were listening to McNaughton.

**Mr. Herridge:** It is beautifully written. This note is addressed to the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George. Mind you, this was written after we tried to get this information. I have the original and I am going to put it in my museum. This is what Mr. Olson wrote:

Could you ask him—

He is asking the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George to ask Mr. Strayer this question. The government did not bring Mr.

Olson forward to give evidence to counteract what Mr. Strayer had said, the best legal evidence that was given. They thought it was best to keep Mr. Olson quiet.

**Mr. Macdonald:** On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, that is another misrepresentation by the hon. member. Mr. Olson was brought forward and was available for examination by the hon. member for Greenwood if he had sought to question him on this point. In fact, at page 136 of the proceedings the Secretary of State for External Affairs specifically invited the hon. member for Greenwood to examine Mr. Olson on this question, and I invite the hon. member to point out to me anywhere in the hearings where the hon. member for Greenwood took advantage of this opportunity and pursued with the authors of the government's legal opinion the basis upon which this opinion was given.

**Mr. Herridge:** After hearing this magnificent testimony from Mr. Strayer we fully expected that the government would bring forward its legal shock troops in the form of Mr. Olson, and we were surprised that it did not. Let us get on with this note.

**Mr. Macdonald:** Let us get on with the facts.

**Mr. Herridge:** Mr. Olson is asking the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George to ask this question of Mr. Strayer:

Would your opinion re out of basin diversions be changed or subject to modification if it turned out that a prior draft of the treaty contained language supporting your conclusion but was subsequently replaced with the unlimited language of the actual treaty?

Then there is a note to the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George from Mr. Olson in these words:

Such is the case in fact but if it is put hypothetically there is no disclosure.

The note is signed "E. R. Olson, Department of Justice". I mention this because we object to this disclosure of information that we were denied. I have inquired about the matter and I understand that the parliamentary secretary has no right to secrets that are held by members of the privy council. This information was asked for by the committee and denied on the basis that it was confidential, but then it was disclosed by Mr. Olson to the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George. We object to the information being given to one member and denied to others.

Before proceeding with related aspects of this development I want to quote the hon.