

*Beauharnois Power Bills*

future is concerned, I can assure the hon. gentleman that I know of no foundation for the rumours to which he has referred. I have heard a great many more rumours than those which he mentioned. But at the moment this company is an entity and that entity functions by reason of the powers received from a body over which this parliament does not exercise control. The government by every means in its power will endeavour to do the following: (a) secure continuance of the enterprise; (b) secure the rights of those who bona fide have put their money in that enterprise; (c) secure proper control and management; (d) take such other steps as may be necessary when terms and conditions are fixed as will ensure the greatest possible benefit to this dominion as a whole by reason of the undertaking now being declared to be a work for the general advantage of Canada.

Mr. CAMPBELL: That can only be done in cooperation with the province of Quebec?

Mr. BENNETT: Absolutely.

Mr. EULER: I do not wish to embarrass the Prime Minister, but—

Mr. BENNETT: You cannot embarrass me.

Mr. EULER: He is never embarrassed. He stated a moment ago, and I agree with him absolutely, that this is a company incorporated by the province with certain rights with which the Dominion cannot interfere. But he said he would endeavour to secure proper control and management of the company. As this parliament has no control over a Quebec-organized company, I was wondering by what means the government would secure proper control and management.

Mr. BENNETT: Perhaps my hon. friend from North Waterloo (Mr. Euler) was not in the house when my colleague, the Secretary of State (Mr. Cahan), was indicating the basis of the legislation in the other enactment; that is on such terms and conditions as may be thought desirable by the governor in council. This does not touch of course the corporate existence of the company. We will endeavour to ensure what I have indicated, namely, proper management of the enterprise.

Mr. EULER: I presume this means that as the government has now taken over the canal as a work for the general advantage of Canada it has a weapon in its hands which it can use for the purpose of—

Mr. CAHAN: Moral suasion.

Mr. EULER: That is about all.

[Mr. Bennett.]

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Have the government now definitely decided to utilize the Beauharnois canal as a link in the canalization system.

Mr. BENNETT: It has to be.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Not necessarily, because my hon. friend will remember it was never definitely decided to do so in the event of international difficulties.

Mr. BENNETT: Subject to that.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I was curious to know whether the government now had definitely decided that this was to be the route. I say that because precaution was taken in the event of its ultimately being chosen the route that it might be utilized for the purpose; but if the government has decided that this, and no other route, will be chosen, I should like to know.

Mr. CAHAN: I do not think we should be asked that question to-night. As I am instructed, the latest and best engineering advice available to the government is that this is one of the most practicable routes down through that section.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not a relevant question.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I beg your pardon, it is.

Mr. BENNETT: It has nothing to do with the matter now.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): It has a great deal to do with it. In the event of a canal being built on the north side of the river, and being a link in the waterways, then it would make a vast difference in the attitude that the government might take towards this undertaking. If it is now chosen by the government as the route which the great waterway system will take, then there is good reason for many of the things being done by this legislation.

Mr. BENNETT: The hon. gentleman surely hardly expects the government to answer that question at the moment. Having had this matter thrust upon us without having had an opportunity to consider all the details, we can make no declaration of policy beyond what is involved in what has been said. The canal is there, it is an available route, it has been treated as the one that would be used, and has been held out in the order in council as the route proper for the purpose, although not the one that the international board thought at first should be the route selected.