

Columbia River Treaty

policy is one which can lend itself very well, I think, to any part of Canada.

We have heard a considerable amount about the possibility or impossibility of diversion for consumptive uses, and we had an amendment moved in this connection. I think it would be well for me to read at this time an extract from the transcript of the proceedings before the external affairs committee. At page 299 appears a preliminary study of the possibilities of additional water supply for Saskatchewan rivers. This study was prepared for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation in March 1962 by Crippen-Wright Engineering Limited, and the summary of their report reads, in part, as follows:

The following observations, without consideration of any planning by the province of Alberta, can be made:

(a) Diversion of the upper North Saskatchewan river into the Red Deer and South Saskatchewan rivers suggests substantial savings in power development costs within Saskatchewan as it would take advantage of regulation provided by the South Saskatchewan dam reservoir and the additional 150 feet of fall available within the province. Diversion at Rocky Mountain House is very low in cost and appears to be an attractive first increment to supplement irrigation, domestic and power requirements.

(b) The diversion of the Athabasca as a first stage of an eventual Peace river diversion, is feasible and seems attractive during or following construction of power projects on the North Saskatchewan river.

(c) Diversion of at least 20,000 cubic feet per second from the Peace river was found to be economical. Even greater quantities are available with upstream regulation.

They are referring there to the Peace river dam at Portage mountain. The study continues:

(d) Diversions of the Kootenay, Columbia, or Fraser river water are high in cost. Water from the Fraser costs the least of that obtainable from the western slope.

As well as keeping ourselves out of a strait-jacket in connection with the treaty and protocol, the contention that we need to take water from the Columbia and bring it over to the prairies, according to the report produced by Crippen-Wright, is absolutely ridiculous. To waste the time of this house with something which, as I see it, according to engineering reports is valueless is almost bordering on irresponsibility.

Reference was made this afternoon to the fact that the federal government should stop British Columbia building dams. This can be done by refusing to give permission which was asserted by the government of Canada in Bill No. 3 which was passed, I believe, in

[Mr. Leboe.]

1955. The point I should like to make here is that there is no way in which the Canadian government can force British Columbia to build dams. I think this is very important. As a matter of fact, one of the matters in the original Bill No. 3 of 1955, if I recollect correctly, was that under clause 9 all of the watershed of the Columbia and other rivers drained into foreign territory which was under federal jurisdiction. But, Mr. Speaker, before this bill was passed clause 9, if that is the clause I am thinking of, and I am sure it is, was deleted, and there was a very good reason why the government of the day deleted that clause from the bill.

The business of centralization and of bringing about federal powers and jurisdictions of this kind may appeal to some. But I want to say on behalf of this party that we are not inclined to pass over the natural resources of a province to federal government jurisdiction. I am sure that if the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) had been in the external affairs committee of that day he would have realized that the position of the government of that day, and the position it took in eliminating clause 9 of the bill to which I have referred, was a wise one indeed.

Reference has been made to downstream benefits, flood control, and so on. Those matters are part of the record and there is no need for me, or for anyone else as far as I can see, to dwell on them. Surely after 1,500 or more pages of evidence, 50 sittings of the external affairs committee when witnesses were subjected to the most searching questions, and the committee having come in with a report that this treaty and the protocol should be ratified, we in this house, after hearing a member from each party giving the position of his party on this issue, should pass the treaty and get along with the business of the house.

I would like to see the treaty ratified by this House of Commons at the earliest possible time so that we can get on with the job in British Columbia. I am sure the people of British Columbia would appreciate it very, very much. Therefore I would urge, Mr. Speaker, that if possible even yet tonight we should pass this treaty.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, I should like to take this opportunity to make a few remarks on this motion concerning the ratification of the Columbia