

Columbia River Treaty

express their view, let them get up and take part in this debate.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas: Let them not sit here in silence acting as they do, as the lackeys for the government and taking no part in the debate, their only contribution consisting of interruptions and rather insipid questions. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Basford: Why are you afraid to answer questions?

Mr. Douglas: I am not afraid to answer questions, to take part in this debate or to express what I think. That does not cover my hon. friend, I can assure you, Mr. Speaker. The report—

Mr. Basford: Then accept the question.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, if my hon. friend has anything to say, will he please get off his conscience and stand up. He has been sitting on his convictions for three days, and it is hard on him. The committee representing the two countries made their report on September 28, 1960, and set out recommended principles upon which the drafting of the treaty should proceed, and I would ask the house to remember that this was agreed to by both countries. One of the stated principles provided in part:

16.(1) Subject to subparagraph (2), Canada and the United States to refrain during the term of the treaty from

(a) diverting from the Columbia river basin any of the flow of the Columbia river above the point at which it crosses the boundary between Canada and the United States;

(b) diverting from the Columbia river basin any of the flow of any tributary which has its confluence with the river in Canada;

This was the beginning. There was to be no diversion. Then, because of the outcry on the prairies even from Liberal newspapers like the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* the government said with regard to this clause, "Ah, of course you can divert, but for consumptive purposes". That is in article XIII(1); but then in the definition consumptive use is defined so that in effect you cannot divert water because it is made uneconomic and impractical to divert it. The Secretary of State for External Affairs seems to think that if he keeps on repeating again and again that the protocol gives the right of diversion, somehow or other he will get people to believe it. He is like a witchdoctor who believes that by repetitive incantations he is somehow going to turn black into white. The fact is that this treaty and the protocol pre-

vent diversion in any practical or economic sense. It will allow some local diversion for stock-watering, but any large scale diversion is to all intents and purposes precluded the moment this treaty goes into effect.

What does this mean? This morning's paper carries a story of the concern on the prairies at the lack of moisture. On the prairies we have periodically gone through cyclical periods of drought. Water is going to be an increasingly scarce commodity on the great plains of western Canada, not only for irrigation but also for domestic and industrial purposes. Industries are growing up on the prairies. Water is needed if those industries are to survive and expand—water for petrochemical industries, water for solution mining of potash, which is rapidly becoming one of Canada's very important industries. I make the prediction that within the next two decades water will be the most precious commodity in western Canada.

Mr. Cooper: One decade.

Mr. Douglas: My hon. friend from Rose-town-Biggar (Mr. Cooper), who has made a long study of this problem, says one decade, and I think he is right. But this treaty is for six decades, and the house ought to know what the treaty is doing. I am sure the country will realize what it is doing. We are now effectively blocking any large scale diversion of water from the Columbia to the prairies of western Canada.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That is not the fact.

Mr. Douglas: The minister keeps saying that that is not the fact. Only a few minutes ago he said that the purpose of the treaty was to prevent water from being diverted for hydroelectric purposes.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): As the primary purpose.

Mr. Douglas: How can we divert water to the prairies unless it is used for hydroelectric generation? The minister says, not as the primary purpose; but there is nothing in the treaty which says that this is precluded only when the primary purpose is hydroelectric generation. If the minister really believes what he is saying and if he is not just trying to deceive the public, he will surely produce a legal opinion or a letter jointly signed by the Canadian and United States governments to the effect that the diversion of water for hydroelectric purposes will be permitted, if generation of water for hydroelectric purposes is not the

[Mr. Douglas.]