

Columbia River Treaty

the areas which had been criticized so repetitiously by the critics of the treaty, and I am sure he demonstrated that as the chief negotiator he had all the competence which was required.

Some remarks have been made concerning other engineers who appeared before the committee, remarks indicating a somewhat critical nature. I should like to compare—and I realize all hon. members have not had the opportunity to read the committee reports—the engineering competence displayed by the Montreal engineering representatives and by Mr. Gordon MacNabb as contrasted with that displayed by such critics of the treaty as Mr. James Libby and Mr. Larratt Higgins. It seemed to me that they were more concerned with political polemics than they were with the scientific engineering aspects of the treaty. I need only refer to a publication distributed during the course of the committee hearing, the *Engineering and Contract Record*, which bore on the front in bold red print the words “The Columbia River Scandal”. This sounded more like an article in a lurid pulp magazine than an article in a scientific journal such as the *Engineering and Contract Record*. As I listened to these gentlemen I came to the conclusion that one of the reasons they had abandoned a strictly scientific approach to the problem and had begun to indulge in the sort of polemics demonstrated in this article was that they had been overwhelmed by the immense prestige of that distinguished Canadian, General McNaughton, who had in recent months taken a strongly critical view of the treaty.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I rise on a question of privilege. I noticed that the hon. member included the name of Mr. Higgins in his strictures with regard to certain witnesses before the committee. He also suggested that Mr. Higgins appeared as an engineering expert, but it was made perfectly plain that Mr. Higgins was an experienced hydroelectric economist, and it was in that role that he appeared before the committee. I think this should be made clear, and I object very much to Mr. Higgins being subjected to these strictures.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, in addition to referring to engineering competence I believe I also referred to scientific competence, and I hope that term is broad enough to cover the representations of Mr. Higgins, who is a social scientist. He is a practitioner of the dismal science of economics. I was endeavouring to

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

be fair. We thought he was going to give scientific evidence, and instead he indulged in polemics. I can give examples if you wish.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): I should certainly like to hear them.

Mr. Dinsdale: All right. I have in front of me a summary of an article by Mr. Higgins which appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on January 14 and 15, 1964. In that article he used words to the effect that “John Diefenbaker retained visions of immortality” and he “wanted to sign the treaty”. This is Mr. Higgins’ explanation of the signing of the treaty on January 17, 1961.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): May I suggest that this is quite irrelevant. It was not said before the committee.

An hon. Member: You asked for it.

Mr. Dinsdale: The hon. member asked for it.

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): This is typical misrepresentation.

Mr. Dinsdale: If I may be allowed to continue, Mr. Speaker, I have been trying to indicate that there were political polemics involved, and I have been trying to demonstrate that fact from the article written by Mr. Higgins which appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on the dates I have indicated. That was Mr. Higgins’ point of view.

Before the committee Hon. Mr. Williston, representing the province of British Columbia, was asked specifically why there was seeming haste in signing the treaty on January 17. I asked that question with Mr. Higgins’ accusation in mind. Mr. Williston said that British Columbia wanted to sign the treaty because they were afraid the treaty would have to be negotiated all over again as a consequence of the imminent change of government in the United States. It will be recalled that President Eisenhower signed the treaty just before the change of government in Washington. I say that Mr. Higgins’ opinion was hardly an engineering or economic one, and that he was indulging in political polemics.

To go on with my remarks, I think these gentlemen were impressed and overawed by the tremendous prestige of General McNaughton, who has been one of the most severe critics of the treaty in recent months. Indeed, the Prime Minister himself came under the influence of the prestige of the same gentleman. I have a statement before me extracted