

*Inquiries of the Ministry***POWER****COLUMBIA RIVER—INQUIRY AS TO MEETING
WITH B.C. PREMIER**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Grant Deachman (Vancouver Quadra):

Mr. Speaker, I wish to address a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Can he tell us whether he has availed himself of the presence of the premier of British Columbia in Ottawa this week to discuss the Columbia river treaty and, if so, were the discussions encouraging?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs):

Mr. Speaker, I have seen the premier of British Columbia three times this week. I had the pleasure of breakfasting with him early this morning, and the discussions we had were very satisfactory. We are both of the same mind in respect of discussions that should be under way very shortly with the government of the United States.

Mr. Stuart A. Fleming (Okanagan-Revelstoke):

As a supplementary question, on a number of occasions it has been stated by both the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Prime Minister that only one outstanding question remains to be resolved, the question of price. Can the minister now advise the house what other outstanding questions there are, and what resolution has been made on them?

Mr. Martin (Essex East):

I think my hon. friend will understand that it would not be advisable to reveal the nature of the negotiations; but the question of price is the final matter to be determined, and the province of British Columbia and the government of Canada see eye to eye on that particular subject which is now vital in these negotiations.

Mr. Fleming (Okanagan-Revelstoke):

Would the minister please advise the house how it is possible that if the question of price can be revealed, other matters must be kept secret?

Mr. Martin (Essex East):

The hon. gentleman will have to trust to the good judgment of the negotiators on this matter, because I do not propose to reveal anything that would in any way disclose matters involved in negotiations; to do so might be prejudicial at this time to the interests of Canada and British Columbia.

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West):

In view of previous statements made by the Prime Minister over a period of time, would the minister give his word as a minister that the negotiations will be completed by January 1, 1964?

[Mr. Drury.]

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I am sure my hon. friend is not serious in that question. But I may say to him that the government and the minister are doing everything they possibly can to bring to a successful conclusion the negotiations that have been under way for some months.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition):

Mr. Speaker, arising out of this discussion and the very complete answers the minister has given, I would ask him whether an opinion has been asked of the law officers of the crown regarding the question of the availability for irrigation purposes of waters from the Columbia being diverted into Saskatchewan. He has received representations from the government of that province in this connection. Has the minister looked into this question and is he assured that, on the basis of the treaty as it now is, diversion of the necessary water for irrigation purposes in Saskatchewan is possible under the treaty?

Mr. Martin (Essex East):

Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that the law officers of the crown have specifically been asked for an opinion, for the simple reason that I do not think there is any doubt about the implications of article 13, part 1, of the treaty.

Mr. Diefenbaker:

I gather from that answer, Mr. Speaker, that the minister, having made the usual careful study for which he is noted, has concluded there is no basis for the fears of the government of Saskatchewan that diversion would be denied them under the treaty as it now stands.

Mr. Martin (Essex East):

Under the article to which I have referred it is clear that consumptive uses provide an opportunity for the irrigation to which the province of Saskatchewan feels it should be entitled under the treaty. I have given the premier of Saskatchewan my view of the implications of the treaty. If the premier does not accept that, it is of course not my responsibility.

Mr. Herridge:

A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that Saskatchewan cannot take advantage of the water under this item covering consumptive uses without there being pumping on one side and the production of electrical energy on the eastern slopes of the Rockies, can the minister say whether that article meets this multi-use purpose?

Mr. Martin (Essex East):

Mr. Speaker, I think the answer I have already given covers the question which my hon. friend has put so lucidly.